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# Engage, learn, achieve

The impact of museum visits on the attainment of  
secondary pupils in the East of England 2006-2007

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Sheila Watson  
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Ceri Jones

September 2007

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When a 14-year boy from Downham Market High School was asked about his assignments, including the one he had just completed after a visit to Gressenhall workhouse, he acknowledged that his previous assignments were often late because:

**"I'm not excited, 'cos I think I'll get a bad grade. But this time it was on time 'cos I thought I would get a good grade and I was excited about it."**

# CONTENTS

KEY FINDINGS		i
SECTION 1	DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS	3
SECTION 2	CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND	52
SECTION 3	DESK RESEARCH	59
SECTION 4	RESEARCH METHODS	75
SECTION 5	QUANTITATIVE DATA	97
SECTION 6	CASE STUDIES	176
APPENDICES		

# CONTENTS IN DETAIL

## KEY FINDINGS

<b>A</b>	Background	i
<b>A1</b>	What this research does	i
<b>A2</b>	What this research is NOT setting out to do	i
<b>B</b>	Key findings	ii
<b>B1</b>	Museums have a positive impact on attainment	ii
<b>B2</b>	Museums motivate pupils across a range of abilities	ii
<b>B3</b>	Teenage boys perform as well as teenage girls	ii
<b>B4</b>	Deprivation and attainment	ii
<b>B5</b>	Museums can help schools tackle difficult areas of the curriculum and assessment	ii
<b>B6</b>	Museums provide different models of engagement for schools	iii
<b>B7</b>	Museums are amazing, imaginative resources for schools	iii
<b>C</b>	Conclusions	iii

## SECTION 1: DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

<b>1.1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	2
	1.1.1 Background	2
	1.1.2 Evidence for attainment	3
	1.1.3 Aims of the evaluation	4
	1.1.4 What the research is not setting out to do	4
	1.1.5 Research methods	5
	1.1.6 A health warning about the research	7
	1.1.7 Attainment	7
<b>1.2</b>	<b>Discussion of research findings</b>	9
	1.2.1 Museums have a positive impact on attainment	9
	• Pupils (and teachers) are positive about their learning	10
	• Museums support the needs of pupils with different learning styles	16
	• Museums provide ‘serious fun’	17
	• Pupils are motivated to do well	18
	• Pupils can become emotionally involved in their work	20
	• Pupils were made to feel valued and respected	22
	• The museum/gallery/archive provides inspirational source material	23
	• The museum visit as an immersive experience	25
	‘Was the workhouse so bad?’ – Museums providing rich, immersive sites for learning	25
	1.2.2 Museums motivate pupils across a range of abilities	29
	• Less able pupils motivated and engaged by museums	30

	• Wordscapes - Museums motivating and engaging less able pupils to learn	30
	• The impact of a museum visit on 'higher ability' pupils	33
	• The impact of a museum visit on 'average ability' pupils	34
	• Teachers' attitudes and the impact on assignment marks	35
1.2.3	Gender – boys perform as well as girls	36
1.2.4	Deprivation and attainment	40
1.2.5	Tackling difficult areas of the curriculum and assessment 'How important was Thomas Clarkson's role in the abolition of the slave trade?' - Archives helping pupils to tackle difficult subjects	41 42
1.2.6	Different models of engagement Skilful facilitation of the school visit is important.	44 44
	• Museums can create learning packages for KS3	45
	• Meticulous planning between museums and schools to develop sessions	45
	• Museum educators and their skills	45
1.3	<b>Conclusions and issues for museums</b>	46

## SECTION 2: CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

2.0	<b>The scope of this research report</b>	50
2.1	<b>Research objectives</b>	51
2.2	<b>Context for the research study</b>	51
	2.2.1 Renaissance	52
	2.2.2 DCMS and its priorities for England's museums	53
2.3	<b>The development of the present research study</b>	53
2.4	<b>Conclusion</b>	56

## SECTION 3: DESK RESEARCH

3.0	<b>Introduction</b>	58
3.1	<b>The Generic Learning Outcomes (GLOs)</b>	58
3.2	<b>The characteristics of museum learning</b>	59
3.3	<b>Attainment, assessment, learning and social inclusion</b>	62
	3.3.1 Attainment, assessment and learning in the National Curriculum	62
	3.3.2 The impact of assessment on pupils	66
	3.3.3 Raising the achievement of the bottom 10-20% of children	69
	3.3.4 The relationship between attainment and social exclusion	70
	3.3.5 Conclusions	71
3.4	<b>Conclusion</b>	71

## SECTION 4: RESEARCH METHODS

4.0	<b>Introduction</b>	73
4.1	<b>The approach to the evaluation</b>	73
4.1.1	Ensuring a breadth of evidence	73
4.1.2	The museums participating in the research study	75
4.1.3	The proportion of secondary pupils participating in the study	76
4.2	<b>Methods of data collection</b>	77
4.2.1	Questionnaires for teachers and pupils visiting museums	78
	• Estimate, distribution and return of questionnaires	78
4.2.2	Assessment marks	78
	• Analysing the assessment marks	79
4.2.3	Four detailed case studies	81
4.2.4	Desk research	82
4.3	<b>Challenges of the research process</b>	83
4.3.1	Challenges - collecting the quantitative data	83
4.3.2	Challenges – selection of the case studies	84
4.4	<b>The schools visiting museums as part of this study</b>	85
4.4.1	Downham Market High School – Technology College	86
4.4.2	The Manor Community College	86
4.4.3	Hampton College	87
4.4.4	Fakenham High School and College	87
4.4.5	Holbrook High School	88
4.4.6	Stradbroke Business and Enterprise College	88
4.4.7	City of Norwich School	89
4.4.8	Rosemary Musker High School	90
4.4.9	Neatherd High School	90
4.5	<b>Research Ethics</b>	91
4.6	<b>Four previous RCMG evaluations and their relationship to the present evaluation</b>	92

## SECTION 5: QUANTITATIVE DATA

5.0	<b>Introduction</b>	95
5.1	<b>Form A: Teachers' questionnaire</b>	95
5.2	<b>Analysing the school postcodes</b>	96
5.2.1	The Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2004 (IMD) 2004	96
5.2.2	Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)	101
5.2.3	Conclusion – what does this mean for attainment?	103
5.3	<b>Form B – Pupils' questionnaire</b>	105
5.3.1	Who completed a Form B?	105
5.3.2	An overview of responses for Form B, KS3 and above	106
5.3.3	Reviewing the responses of pupils according to gender	107
5.3.4	Reviewing the responses of pupils according to age	109
5.3.5	Reviewing the responses for pupils - allowing for the "Gressenhall Effect"	111

5.3.6	Reviewing the responses of pupils in comparison with the four recent RCMG studies	112
5.3.7	Conclusion - linking positive learning experiences with attainment	115
5.4	<b>Assessment marks</b>	115
5.4.1	The overall picture – the impact of the museum visit on attainment	116
5.4.2	The impact of gender on attainment	119
5.4.3	The impact of ability on attainment	119
5.4.4	Conclusion – did the museum visit have an impact on attainment?	123
5.5	<b>The schools involved in the research study</b>	124
5.5.1	Downham Market High School (Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse)	126
5.5.2	Neatherd High School (Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse)	130
5.5.3	Holbrook High School (Suffolk Archives)	133
5.5.4	City of Norwich School (Sainsbury Centre for the Visual Arts, UEA)	135
5.5.5	The Manor Community College (Fitzwilliam Museum)	139
5.5.6	Fakenham High School (Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse)	142
5.5.7	Rosemary Musker High School (Sainsbury Centre for the Visual Arts)	147
5.5.8	Hampton College (Peterborough Museum)	150
5.8.9	Stradbroke Business and Enterprise College (Moyses Hall)	153
5.9	<b>Conclusion – the limits of quantitative data</b>	153

## SECTION 6: CASE STUDIES

### CASE STUDY 1: *Was the workhouse so bad?*

6.1	<i>Was the workhouse so bad?</i>	155
	<b>Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse and Downham Market High School</b>	
6.1.1	<b>Overview</b>	155
6.1.2	<b>Research process</b>	157
6.1.3	<b>Context and background</b>	157
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Downham Market</li> <li>Downham Market High School</li> <li>Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse</li> </ul>	157 157 158
6.1.4	<b>Key findings</b>	159
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The relationship between the museum and the school matters</li> <li>It is important for teachers undertaking visits to schools to have support from within their institutions</li> <li>Mr Bloom head teacher, Downham Market High School</li> <li>The school valued the visit as much for its impact on pupils' learning and experiences as for its link with improved attainment levels in an assessed piece of work</li> <li>Pupils were motivated by their emotional engagement</li> </ul>	159 159 159 160 161

• Increased expectations/ improved confidence	162
• A The importance of the sense of place	163
• The outcomes for the pupils in terms of their learning using the Generic Learning Outcomes	164
• Assessment marks	169
<b>6.1.5 Conclusions</b>	<b>171</b>

## **CASE STUDY 2: *Houses, habitats and homelessness***

<b>6.2 <i>Houses, habitats and homelessness</i></b>	<b>174</b>
<b>Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse and Fakenham High School, Norfolk</b>	
<b>6.2.1 Overview</b>	<b>174</b>
<b>6.2.2 Research Process</b>	<b>175</b>
<b>6.2.3 Context and Background</b>	<b>175</b>
• Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse	175
• Fakenham High School and College	176
• Teachers' objectives	176
<b>6.2.4 A description of the Houses, Habitats and Homelessness programme</b>	<b>177</b>
<b>6.2.5 Key findings</b>	<b>180</b>
• Long term planning by museum education staff with teachers and other educational professionals was an important factor in developing this successful programme for schools.	180
• Learning was developed through discussion and interaction with adults	182
• Learning was promoted by emotional engagement with the 'real thing' in an environment that was richer than that offered by the classroom	182
• Learning was active and did not involve writing	183
• Pupils were intrinsically motivated to do well	184
• Learning within the museum will be developed in later years.	184
• Learning in the sessions was apparent from the interviews and has been categorised according to the GLOS	184
• Assessment marks	187
<b>6.2.6 Conclusion</b>	<b>188</b>

## CASE STUDY 3: *Extraordinary people and things*

6.3	<i>'Extraordinary people and things'</i>	189
	Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, Norwich and Rosemary Musker High School, Thetford	
6.3.1	Overview	190
6.3.2	Research Process	191
6.3.3	Context and background	191
	• Rosemary Musker High School	192
	• A summary of ' <i>Extraordinary people and things</i> '	193
6.3.4	Key findings	196
	• Museums and galleries can support areas of the curriculum that are difficult for schools to cover in the classroom	196
	• Museums can inspire pupils with their collections and give them confidence in their own work while encouraging them to work independently	196
	• The relationship between the museum and the school was built up over time and acts as a model of how museums and their resources can support schools in the galleries and in the classroom	198
	• The session in the gallery and the visits from the artists provided pupils who did not normally have access to such activities with a rich cultural experience	198
	• While the session sought to build on existing work and experiences it broadened pupils' horizons	199
	• The partnership with the Sainsbury Centre encouraged the school to develop a longer lasting session – a model suggested by a moderator and one they will now follow because it was successful	200
	• Pupil perceptions of the visit and the work with the artists	200
	• Assessment marks	203
6.3.5	Conclusions	204

## CASE STUDY 4: *Wordscapes*

6.4	<i>Wordscapes: pictures, language and inspiration</i>	206
	The Fitzwilliam Museum and The Manor Community College, Cambridge	
6.4.1	Overview	206
6.4.2	Research Process	207
6.4.3	Context and background.	207
	• The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge	207
	• The Manor Community College, Cambridge	208
	• Background planning for the visit	208
6.4.4	A summary of the visit to the museum	209

6.4.5	The school's perspective	214
6.4.6	The museum's perspective	215
6.4.7	Pupils' perceptions of the visit	215
6.4.8	<b>Key findings</b>	216
	• Low ability pupils respond very well to a structured session in the museum	216
	• The experience and skill of the museum education officer played a large part in ensuring that the visit was a success	216
	• Training is important	216
	• Pupils felt valued	217
	• Learning took place in a variety of ways	217
	• Assessment marks	219
6.4.9	<b>Conclusion</b>	220

## APPENDICES

**Appendix 1** References

**Appendix 2**

- Form A Teacher's Questionnaire
- Form B Pupil's Questionnaire, KS3 and above

**Appendix 3** Consent forms and information sheets for pupils and adults

## KEY FINDINGS

### A. Background

Renaissance East of England and Museums, Libraries and Archives Council East of England (MLA East of England) commissioned this research from the Research Centre for Museums and Galleries (RCMG) at the University of Leicester to investigate the impact that museums in the East of England region have on the attainment of secondary-age pupils completing an assessed piece of work as a result of their museum visit. Funding for the project has come from Renaissance, a £150 million programme to transform England's regional museums, and MLA East of England.

This exploratory research has emerged from the experiences of a very small sample of six pupils from Downham Market High School who got better marks for their History assignment following a visit to Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse. It draws on the experiences of nine schools visiting five museums and galleries and one archive across the East of England region, which between them provided results for 762 secondary pupils. The evidence obtained has helped us to understand more about the impact that museums can have on the attainment of secondary age pupils and raises many new questions for future investigation.

#### A1. What this research does

- It gives a 'snapshot' of the impact of a museum visits on pupil attainment in the East of England region based on an assessed piece of work completed after a museum visit
- Evidence of attainment is based upon the judgements made by teachers about their pupils' progression in the subject
- It investigates, through quantitative and qualitative research, the attitudes of pupils and teachers to museum visits and the learning that takes place there
- It recognises the complexity of attainment and it does not attempt to look at the details of assessment

#### A2. What this research is NOT setting out to do

- It is not a comprehensive study of attainment in secondary education across the East of England region
- It does not seek to engage with the nuances of assessment
- It has not sought to make comparisons with the experiences of pupils completing an assessed piece of work without a museum visit
- No comparisons have been made across subjects, between schools or between museums – it is not our intention to judge whether there are 'good' or 'bad' models of using museums for assessed pieces of work

## **B. Key findings**

### **B1. Museums have a positive impact on attainment**

- 60% of pupils in this study achieved a higher mark for their assessed piece of work after a museum visit when compared to three previous assignment marks
- Pupils (and teachers) are positive about their learning
- Museums support the needs of pupils with different learning styles
- Museums provide 'serious fun'
- Pupils are motivated to do well
- Pupils can become emotionally involved in their work
- Pupils were made to feel valued and respected
- The museum/gallery/archive provides inspirational source material
- The museum visit is an immersive experience

### **B2. Museums motivate pupils across a range of abilities**

- Our evidence suggests that museums can support the learning needs of pupils of all abilities
- The majority of pupils in all categories saw an increase in their marks for their museum-based assignment compared to previous assignments: 51% of 'higher ability' pupils, 55% of 'average ability' pupils and 71% of 'lower ability' pupils
- Teachers and museum educators did not expect that so many 'lower ability' pupils would benefit from the museum experience
- The attitudes of teachers can have a positive or negative impact on the attainment of pupils depending on whether they are supportive of the museum work
- Understanding in more depth the impact of the museum visit on pupils of different abilities, however, is a question for future research studies

### **B3. Teenage boys perform as well as teenage girls**

- 58% of teenage boys saw an increase in their marks for the museum-based assignment compared to 61% of girls
- Both teenage boys and girls in the study were enthusiastic about their museum visits and confident about their learning

### **B4. Deprivation and attainment**

- This present study cannot draw any conclusions about the links between attainment and deprivation as experienced by pupils
- Most of the schools draw their pupils from mainly rural areas where pockets of deprivation are often difficult to identify

### **B5. Museums can help schools tackle difficult areas of the curriculum and assessment**

- Museums have the resources and expert staff to support schools with areas of the curriculum that they might find difficult to cover in the classroom
- Pupils can access 'real' objects and make meaningful connections with their subject, according to their teachers these positive experiences directly influence the higher standard of work produced

### **B6. Museums provide different models of engagement for schools**

- There is no single best practice model although there are key characteristics that can be identified which appear to ensure good learning experiences for secondary pupils at museums
- Museums can support independent learning by pupils but it needs to be well structured
- Skilful facilitation of the school visit by museum educators is important
- Museums can create learning packages for KS3, which are often repeated, tested and therefore refined over time
- Meticulous planning between museums and schools to develop sessions is crucial to success

### **B7. Museums are amazing, imaginative resources for schools**

- For pupils, museums offer rich, immersive learning experiences which are enjoyable and memorable
- They can inspire and motivate young people, offering experiences that are not always possible, or indeed desirable, in the school context
- They can be used in creative and flexible ways to support different areas of the curriculum
- They can be used by schools seeking either single sessions or multiple contact sessions for their pupils, and they can accommodate groups ranging in size from whole year groups to smaller groups of ten pupils or less

## **C. Conclusions**

- Museums in this study have made the investment to hone and develop sessions so that they are effective as possible for pupils, refining them over time and engaging in dialogue with schools so that continual improvements can be made. This investment is crucial and highlights that in order for museums to target young people of secondary age there needs to be time given over to planning and development far in advance. It is essential that museums are flexible and self-reflective in what they can offer
- For museum educators, it is important for them to understand the nature of assessment and how it is integral to learning and informed teaching, and how museums can best support this. To negotiate the complexity of pupil attainment, skills and understanding would need to be developed through training
- There are many similarities between the characteristics identified for museum learning experiences and the new secondary curriculum which museums could support

The research raises the following questions:

- Are schools using museums enough to support assessed pieces of work?
- Is there scope for museums to do more to support the needs of secondary schools around assessment?

## SECTION 1: DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

<b>1.1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	2
1.1.1	Background	2
1.1.2	Evidence for attainment	3
1.1.3	Aims of the evaluation	4
1.1.4	What the research is not setting out to do	4
1.1.5	Research methods	5
1.1.6	A health warning about the research	7
1.1.7	Attainment	7
<b>1.2</b>	<b>Discussion of research findings</b>	9
1.2.1	Museums have a positive impact on attainment	9
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils (and teachers) are positive about their learning</li> <li>• Museums support the needs of pupils with different learning styles</li> <li>• Museums provide 'serious fun'</li> <li>• Pupils are motivated to do well</li> <li>• Pupils can become emotionally involved in their work</li> <li>• Pupils were made to feel valued and respected</li> <li>• The museum/gallery/archive provides inspirational source material</li> <li>• The museum visit is an immersive experience</li> </ul>	10
	'Was the workhouse so bad?' – Museums providing rich, immersive sites for learning	16
		17
		18
		20
		22
		23
		25
		25
1.2.2	Museums motivate pupils across a range of abilities	29
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less able pupils motivated and engaged by museums</li> <li>• Wordscapes - Museums motivating and engaging less able pupils to learn</li> <li>• The impact of a museum visit on 'higher ability' pupils</li> <li>• The impact of a museum visit on 'average ability' pupils</li> <li>• Teachers' attitudes and the impact on assignment marks</li> </ul>	30
		30
		33
		34
		35
1.2.3	Gender – boys perform as well as girls	36
1.2.4	Deprivation and attainment	40
1.2.5	Tackling difficult areas of the curriculum and assessment	41
	'How important was Thomas Clarkson's role in the abolition of the slave trade?' - Archives helping pupils to tackle difficult subjects	42
1.2.6	Different models of engagement	44
	Skilful facilitation of the school visit is important.	44
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Museums can create learning packages for KS3</li> <li>• Meticulous planning between museums and schools to develop sessions</li> <li>• Museum educators and their skills</li> </ul>	45
		45
		45
<b>1.3</b>	<b>Conclusions and issues for museums</b>	46

## SECTION 1: DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

### 1.1 Introduction

This research is exploratory in nature and sets out to investigate the impact on the attainment of secondary-age pupils completing a piece of assessed work as a result of a museum visit. The research was undertaken in the academic year 2006-2007 with five museums, one archive<sup>1</sup> and nine schools selected from across the East of England region, which between them provided results for 762 secondary pupils.

The East of England Hub and the Museums, Libraries and Archives East of England commissioned this research from the Research Centre for Museums and Galleries (RCMG) to investigate the impact that museums in the East of England region had on the attainment of secondary-age pupils completing an assessed piece of work as a result of their museum visit. Funding for the project has come from Renaissance, a £150 million programme to transform England's regional museums, and MLA East of England.

#### 1.1.1 Background

This study has emerged from the experience of four large-scale national evaluation research programmes into the impact and outcomes of learning in museums for school-aged children and young people, funded through programmes initiated by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS).

- *What did you learn at the museum today? The evaluation of the impact of the Renaissance in the Regions Education programme in the three Phase 1 Hubs (August, September and October 2003)*, MLA/RCMG, 2004 (RR1:2003)
- *Inspiration, Identity, Learning: The Value of Museums. The evaluation of the impact of the DCMS/DfES Strategic Commissioning 2003-2004: National/Regional Museum Education Partnerships*, DCMS/RCMG, 2004 (DCMS/DfES1:2004)
- *What did you learn at the museum today? Second study: Evaluation of the outcomes and impact of learning through the implementation of the Education Programme Delivery Plan across nine Regional Hubs*, MLA/RCMG, 2006 (RR2:2005)
- *Inspiration, Identity, Learning: The Value of Museums Second Study. An evaluation of the DCMS/DCSF National/Regional Museum Partnership Programme in 2006-2007*, DCMS/RCMG, 2007 (DCMS/DCFS2:2007)

These studies have generated a considerable amount of robust quantitative and qualitative data demonstrating the significant impact that museums can have on the learning outcomes of children and young people, of both

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<sup>1</sup> This research study was originally intended to be with museums and a very small sample of a project with seven pupils visiting an archive was included in the final stages of the research period. Throughout the report, therefore, we refer to museums only.

primary and secondary age. The ability to 'test' the data set against findings from four previous studies draws attention to the significance of having a larger body of data in which to nest the findings, with evidence from 13,750 pupils surveyed across England over four years.

*What did you learn at the museum today? Second study* (MLA/RCMG, 2005) suggested that a museum visit could have a positive impact on the attainment of secondary age pupils when an assessed piece of work was completed as a result of the visit. This finding emerged from the experiences of Key Stage three pupils from Downham Market High School who visited Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse during their four week focus on the topic of a nineteenth-century workhouse and poor law, part of the Key Stage three History curriculum. The visit was designed in close partnership with the museum to enable pupils to gather information for an assignment entitled '*Was the workhouse so bad?*' Although the entire year group visited the museum, six pupils were interviewed and most of them had experienced an increase in their levels of attainment on completion of the assignment, some going up by as much as two levels. It was felt, however, that whilst the Gressenhall case study provided some evidence of the impact on pupils at Downham Market School, more evidence was needed to investigate whether museums can have an impact on secondary attainment. This research study was therefore designed to investigate whether this finding would be repeated elsewhere and by the same school in another academic year.

### **1.1.2 Evidence for attainment**

This research study was built on the evidence of the Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse case study in *What did you learn at the museum today? Second study*. Whilst this evidence is robust in terms of methodology, it was numerically a tiny sample. To obtain a broader picture of the potential impact of museum visits on secondary pupils' attainment it was important to get evidence on a much larger scale for this research study.

The aim therefore was to work with a number of diverse museums and galleries from across the East of England region. Museums were chosen on the basis that they would cover a number of curriculum subjects, such as history, art, science and geography, and provide a variety of contexts. A condition of the research study was that museums and galleries would be working with secondary schools whose participation in curriculum-focused sessions in the museum would lead to an assessed piece of course work. Schools who did not undertake an assessed piece of course work were not able to participate in this study. Furthermore, with their inclusion in the project, museums were committed to being proactive research participants, supporting the collection of data from schools.

Schools were asked to provide marks for pupils for the assignment completed as a result of the museum visit and up to three previous assignment marks so that the impact of the museum visit could be placed in the context of pupil achievement to date and any pupil progression discerned. This was following the model used with Downham Market High School for *What did you learn at the museum today? Second study*.

In this way, this research is based on teacher assessment and their judgements about the nature of pupil progression; following school practice this has been to indicate whether a pupil, in their piece of assessed work, has gone up, stayed the same, or fallen in their performance. The museums have had no involvement in the judgement of pupil progression or any influence over it, acting solely as source material and stimulus for the assignment completed by pupils.

### **1.1.3 Aims of the evaluation**

The aim of the research was to investigate whether museum visits would have an impact on the attainment of secondary school pupils, where a piece of assessed work was completed following the visit. It focuses specifically on schools in the East of England region who were undertaking an assessed piece of work with a museum or archive and who were willing to provide evidence of pupil attainment. This was used to give an overview of pupil achievement based on judgments made about that progression by the teachers who supplied the data.

The specific research questions for this study were as follows:

*What impact do museum visits have on the attainment of secondary pupils?*

- What are the teacher's objectives for the visit?
- What are the museum's objectives for the visit?
- What are the characteristics of the visit?
- What are the specific characteristics of the learning that takes place in museums, which supports attainment in the curriculum?
- What factors in the museum experience are significant and impact on the young people?

The research study aimed to include a diverse range of museums and schools from across the region, and to use both qualitative and quantitative research methods in order to gain both a broad overview and an in-depth understanding of pupil experiences which would help to explain any findings from the assessment data provided by schools.

### **1.1.4 What the research is not setting out to do**

This research study does not seek to be a comprehensive study of attainment in secondary education across the East of England region but an initial overview of the impact of a museum visit on pupil attainment.

It does not set out to compare the experience of pupils on a museum visit with other types of learning experiences, nor does it look in detail at the individual assessment criteria for each assignment or subject. It recognises that there are many different factors impacting on pupil attitudes to, and achievement in, their assessed pieces of work besides the influence of the museum visit, including peer pressure, teacher competence and family background. Such factors are outside the scope of this survey.

The research does not seek to engage with the nuances of assessment in different areas of the curriculum. This study recognises that each school develops its own individual assessments and methods of assessment within the national curriculum framework so comparisons across schools would not compare like for like in any meaningful way. This individual approach to pupil learning and assessment by schools is recognised and encouraged by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) and is implemented in the new secondary school curriculum which is designed to give teachers a less prescriptive, more flexible framework for teaching, creating more scope to tailor the curriculum to meet the needs of individual pupils.

It has not sought to make comparisons with the experiences of pupils completing an assessed piece of work without a museum visit. Schools were selected for the research on the basis that the whole year group would be involved in the museum visit. It was possible to make some comparisons for one school (Holbrook High School) between pupils who were involved in a pilot project with local archives and pupils who did not have this experience as this school was included in the research at a later date, but this is a very small example.

This study does build on our understanding of how museums can impact on pupil attainment, increasing the evidence we have from only six pupils from one school visiting one museum, to evidence from 762 pupils from nine schools visiting six museums across the East of England region.

Whilst this report therefore raises interesting findings in relation to museums and secondary attainment, it reveals areas which need to be explored in greater depth before firm conclusions can be drawn.

#### **1.1.5 Research methods**

This research study uses mixed methods, both quantitative and qualitative, in order to gain both a broad overview and an in-depth understanding through case studies of the potential impact of a museum visit on the attainment of secondary age pupils through an assessed piece of work following the visit. Quantitative and qualitative research methods offer different kinds of evidence and in this report they are used to complement each other, a combination which is increasingly familiar in social science research.

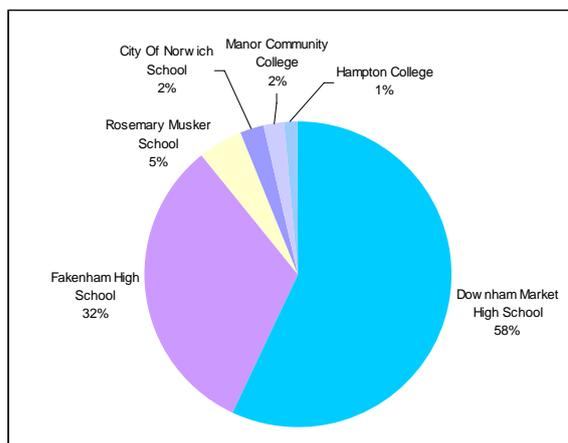
The RCMG researchers involved in the project have long experience of, and backgrounds in, museums and museum education, and the research design has been informed by four large-scale national studies on the impact of museum education programmes carried out by RCMG for the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) and for the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) between 2003 and 2007.

The research study involved six museums and nine schools that provided assessment marks for their pupils and, in most cases, pupils and teachers completed questionnaires at the end of their museum visit. In total, assignment marks for 762 pupils were provided by the schools and 451 pupils completed a questionnaire about their learning experiences immediately after their museum visit. Four schools were selected to take part in case

studies to enable us to explore further the museum experiences that led to the attitudes of the participants and impact on attainment as recorded quantitatively in the questionnaires and assessment marks. This was facilitated through the observation of visits by schools to museums and post-visit interviews with teachers and pupils.

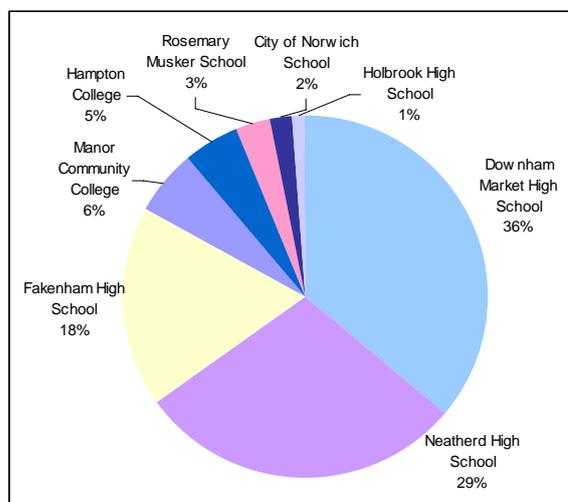
Despite the care taken to select schools from across the region, unexpected circumstances meant that pupils who visited Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse Museum are over-represented in the sample of pupils. This was due to the withdrawal, at very short notice, of a selective grammar school visiting the Imperial War Museum, Duxford, from the research project, which necessitated their replacement at very short notice by Fakenham High School that was visiting Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse. In total, 90% of the questionnaires returned by pupils were from schools that visited Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse, and these schools provided a further 83% of the assignment marks that were returned.

**Fig. 1.1.5a: Form B KS3 and above. Breakdown of returned questionnaires by school**



N=451

**Fig. 1.1.5b: Assessment marks. Breakdown of returned assessment marks by school**



N=762

There were a number of challenges which both necessitated changes to the research design and which had implications for the analysis and interpretation of the data provided by schools. These can be summarised as follows:

- The complexities of selecting suitable schools and the withdrawal of one school from the research at the last minute which led to the over-representation of schools using Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse
- There was an unavoidable emphasis on arts and humanities subjects
- The data from the schools was collected and controlled by the museums; one impact was that RCMG had limited knowledge of the context of schools and their museum visits
- Not all schools were able to provide three previous marks for all pupils
- The difference in subjects, the types of assessment, and the experiences of pupils has meant that any conclusions drawn are tentative. Assessment marks have been analysed according to the judgement of the teacher regarding pupil progression.

#### **1.1.6 A health warning about the research**

This is a small research study which gives a 'snapshot' of the impact of a museum visits on pupil attainment in the East of England region based on an assessed piece of work completed after the museum visit. As a result of the self-selected museums and schools involved in the study it reflects secondary usage of museums in the subjects of History, Geography, Art and English alone.

To reiterate, this study does not take an overall look at secondary pupil attainment across the East of England or make any general conclusions to that effect. It recognises the complexity of attainment and it does not attempt to look at the detail of assessment. This is the teacher's role and evidence is based upon the judgements made by teachers about their pupils' progression in the subject. Equally, no comparisons are made across subjects or between schools – it is not our intention to judge whether there are 'good' or 'bad' models of using museums for assessed pieces of work.

This research study also involved various models of educational programmes used by museums to support pupil learning and attainment. There is no intention in this study to suggest that one model is better than any other.

#### **1.1.7 Attainment**

A key term used in this research study is 'attainment.' In the National Curriculum, attainment is measured through assessment of pupils, with formal, standard testing taking place at various stages of a pupil's school career and continuous assessment in the classroom by teachers which may be measured in a number of different ways. This research study focuses on the impact of attainment of secondary age pupils in an assessed piece of work as the result of a museum visit (where the assignment is set by the school) rather than the attainment of secondary pupils in general.

This research study recognises that attainment is a complex subject and part of the wider learning process of school which may be influenced, for instance, by:

- Teachers' aspirations and experience
- School philosophy
- Quality of facilitation
- Relationship between the school and the museum
- The timing of the visit to the museum.

Each subject taught at secondary level has its own set of attainment targets and level descriptions which will vary since each subject has its own distinct set of concepts and skills to master. Therefore, a level 5 in English is not, for instance, directly comparable to a level 5 in Science.

This study therefore only attempts to measure at a basic level the impact that a museum visit has on the attainment of pupils. Attainment as measured through assessment gives only a 'snapshot' of a pupil's performance at a given point in time and is an ongoing process. In the National Curriculum the achievement of pupils is measured in relation to 'attainment targets' which is the knowledge, skills and understanding which pupils of different abilities and maturities are expected to have by the end of each key stage. Alongside standard, formal testing pupils are continuously assessed throughout their time in school; judgements are made about their learning by teachers through assignments and other set tasks. This study therefore relies on the judgement of teachers as to how far the pupil has progressed, or has not progressed, in their assessed piece of work completed following a museum visit.

Assessment has the twofold purpose in that it not only records what has been achieved by pupils but it can be used as a tool to promote learning.<sup>2</sup> This latter approach to assessment – 'assessment for learning' - is of interest to museums as the types of learning advocated can be seen as characteristic of museum learning. 'Assessment for learning' focuses more on the needs of the learner and helping them to identify the next steps they need to take in order to make progress in their learning. It takes the premise that for effective learning to take place, learners need to know what it is they are trying to achieve. It aims to develop the learner's capacity for self-reflection, for them to actively seek out opportunities for learning – to become independent learners. Where assessment is used effectively, learners understand the aim of their learning and how they can achieve that aim. Effective assessment in school can have a beneficial impact on the pupil's learning experience through:

- Raising standards of attainment and behaviour
- Improving pupil attitudes and response
- Enabling the active involvement of pupils in their own learning
- Promoting pupil self-esteem through a shared understanding of the learning process.

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<sup>2</sup> Weeden, Winter and Broadfoot, 2002

Assessment has to be carefully managed as, for pupils, it is an emotional process. Pupils who achieve the levels expected or higher than expected receive independent confirmation from the school and examiners that they have performed well. Their sense of self worth and pride may be increased. For pupils who do not achieve as much as their peers, assessment continues to confirm what they already know. They may become demotivated and demoralised. It is recognised that there is a persistent core of under-achieving pupils although strategies intended to help the bottom 10-20% of pupils have met with mixed success. Underachievement is a concern for society as well as for individual pupils. The importance placed on education in twenty-first century society means that formal qualifications provide young people with more than academic success, namely access to a range of opportunities. Without formal qualifications young people are increasingly placed at a disadvantage and may struggle to fulfil their potential. Low educational attainment has also been linked to poorer reported general health, depression and disengagement with civic and community life. Ensuring that pupils are given fair methods of assessment and are involved in their learning so that they understand their progression, therefore, becomes far more crucial than mere academic success because of the impact it can have on their life outside of school.

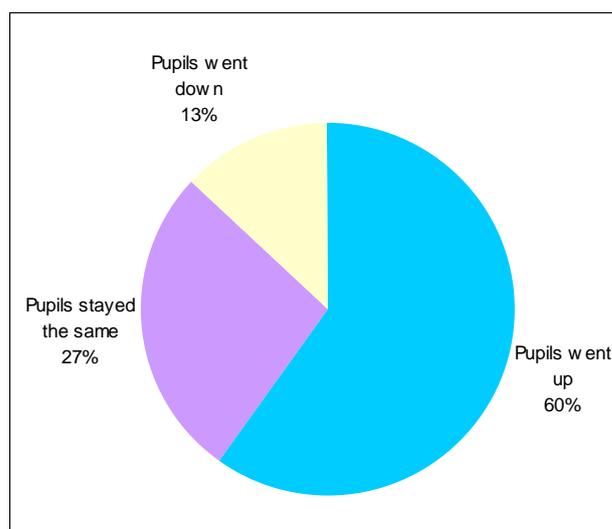
If pupils are to do well therefore they need to be motivated to do their best. Changes to the new secondary curriculum recognise that pupils need to be motivated and engaged learners; that assessment should support teaching and learning, and provide more opportunities for focused support and challenge for pupils where needed. There is an increased emphasis on personalised learning, making connections across the curriculum and introducing dynamic, innovative teaching and learning methods. If museums are to really meet the needs of the secondary school sector they not only need to understand the how museum resources and experiences can be relevant to the curriculum, but how integral assessment is to the curriculum and to the future success of young people.

## **1.2 Discussion of research findings**

### **1.2.1 Museums have a positive impact on attainment**

Where a piece of assessed work is linked to a museum visit, the evidence from this study demonstrates that museums can have a positive impact on pupil attainment where the resulting mark is compared to previous assignments. Analysis of assignment marks for 762 pupils, based on the teachers' judgement of their progression, reveals that of these pupils, 60% achieved a higher mark after a museum visit for their assessed piece of work, whilst 27% of pupils stayed the same. Only 13% of pupils went down in their marks for their assignment.

**Fig. 1.2.1a: Assessment marks. Breakdown by whether pupils went up, stayed the same or fell in their museum-related assignment marks**



N=762

It was not possible to use a control group of pupils who undertook the assignment without participating in the museum visit because schools chose to bring whole year groups and the assignment was, with one exception, linked to the visit.

How can we account for this positive impact in pupil attainment as indicated by their teachers? From looking at the quantitative and qualitative data collected and analysed as part of the study we can suggest that the following museum-related factors are important in enabling pupils to achieve higher marks in their assignments:

- Pupils (and teachers) are positive about their learning
- Museums support the needs of pupils with different learning styles
- Museums provide 'serious fun'
- Pupils are motivated to do well
- Pupils can become emotionally involved in their work
- Pupils were made to feel valued and respected
- The museum/gallery/archive provides inspirational source material
- The museum visit is an immersive experience.

• **Pupils (and teachers) are positive about their learning**

The increase experienced by the majority of pupils can be linked to the positive learning experiences evidenced in the questionnaires completed by pupils immediately after their museum visit. Over 90% of pupils agreed that they had enjoyed their experience and that they had discovered some interesting things from the visit. Eighty-nine per cent (89%) felt that the museum was a good place to learn in a different way from school, whilst 85% agreed that the visit had given them a better understanding of the subject. A very positive 84% of pupils could make sense of most of things they did at the museum, and 78% of pupils felt more inspired as a result.

**Table 1.2.1a: Form B, KS3 and above. Breakdown of pupils' responses**

<b>KS3 and above pupils</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
I enjoyed today's visit	91%	2%	6%
I discovered some interesting things from the visit today	91%	4%	5%
A visit to a museum / gallery makes school work more inspiring	78%	10%	12%
The visit has given me a better understanding of the subject	85%	6%	9%
A museum visit is a good chance to pick up new skills	70%	9%	21%
The museum is a good place to learn in a different way to school	90%	4%	6%
I could make sense of most of the things we saw and did at the museum	84%	5%	10%
I would come again	63%	9%	28%
I've left the museum more interested in the subject than when I came	71%	9%	20%

Q.1,3,4,6&9, N=449; Q.2,5,7&8, N=450 (missing excluded)

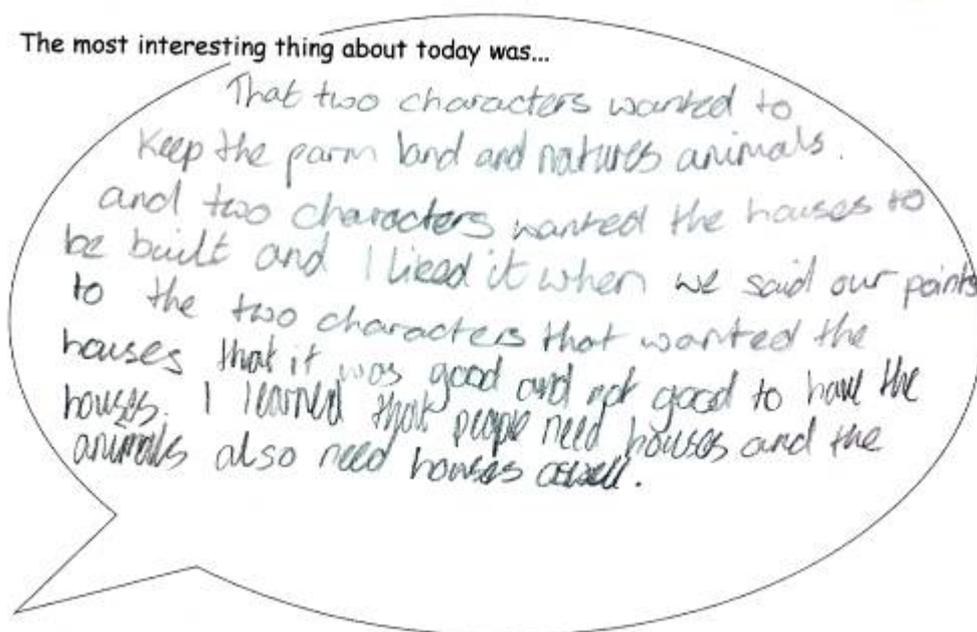
In contrast, pupils appeared to be more cautious in their enthusiasm for re-visiting the museum (63%). However in a region that is more rural than the rest of the country, physical distance and the associated challenges of transport to reach museums such as Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse becomes a greater issue perhaps than in urban areas. Young people may have less independence and therefore have less choice over their leisure and social activities.

The sense from the museum visit using the evidence provided by Form B is that pupils enjoyed their visit highly and found it a very favourable way to learn in comparison to school. They felt inspired by their experiences and it was geared towards their learning as most pupils could make sense of most of what they did at the museum.

Pupil A from Fakenham High School wrote that the most interesting thing about her visit to the museum was:

*'...talking to all the pretend characters and joining in the discussions. I found it more fun to do it this way than doing it in the classroom. Also I liked seeing all the animals.'*

Pupil P, also from Fakenham High School, wrote the following response after the visit:



It was evident from some of the pupils' responses that they clearly understood the purpose of the visit, which was to help them complete their piece of assessed work or coursework. Assessment is beneficial for pupils when it is used as a tool for learning, and enabling pupils to understand the purposes of assessment is one way in which this can be achieved. For the head teacher of Downham Market High School, the value of the visit to Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse is that the pupils understand they are going for a learning experience:

*I think it's important that if we, if we're carrying out an educational visit, youngsters see that it's for a purpose and has got a particular purpose. And that they need to show us that what it is that they can reproduce, so that it's not seen as a jolly. We have jollies which are rewards, but we also have a range of visits which are very distinctly educational visits, whether it's a geography fieldtrip, their history battlefields trip or the Gressenhall visits, it's an integral part of the curriculum.*

Pupils shared this view as we found in interviews and responses to the questionnaires; they were able to see the purpose of their visit.

Pupils from Manor Community College who normally struggle in English felt that the visit to the Fitzwilliam Museum helped them with their writing because they were able to work with real paintings which stimulated and inspired them:

*'Better words. Because you are right in front of that actual picture. You couldn't see so much - like all that in the background - you would not be able to see so much in a postcard.'*

That an educational trip can clearly be so enjoyable for pupils is part of its success, helping to link in pupil's minds the idea that learning can be a

positive experience rather than ‘boring.’ As one pupil from Manor Community College commented:

*‘I thought it was a bit boring at first then it was quite good.’*

The sessions offered pupils a very positive experience that supported their self-esteem and developed their confidence in their learning. It is well documented in previous research studies carried out by RCMG that museums can make learning ‘fun’ but pupils in this study appear to be even more positive about their experiences in comparison.

The questionnaires used for this research study were adapted from questionnaires used successfully in four previous research studies undertaken by RCMG for MLA and DCMS. It should be noted that there were some changes made to the questionnaire for older pupils in some of the research studies to adjust for the different nature of the museum experience and to reflect changes in the research methodology over time.

Most telling is that pupils enjoyed the visit as a good place to learn in a different way from school; pupils’ responses here are higher than previous studies (90% compared to 65%-86%), although the relatively low response from the DCMS/DCSF2:2007 study may have been a result of altering the sense of the question. Pupils also felt that their school work became more inspiring as a result of the visit than pupils in previous studies (78% compared to 58%-68%). However, even though it seemed that pupils from the East of England were less enthusiastic about visiting the museum again, their response is actually very similar to previous studies (63% compared to 55%-68%).

**Table 1.2.1b: Form B KS3 and above. What older pupils said about their learning, comparing EE:2007 with RR1:2003, DCMS/DfES1:2004, RR2:2005 and DCMS/DCSF2:2007**

Older pupils (Key Stage 3 and above)	‘Yes’ RR1:2003	‘Yes’ DCMS/ DfES1:2004	‘Yes’ RR2:2005	‘Yes’ DCMS/ DfES2:2007	‘Yes’ EE:2007
I enjoyed today’s visit (DCMS/DCSF2:2007: I enjoyed today)	n/a	n/a	86%	91%	<b>91%</b>
Today’s visit has given me lots to think about	73%	77%	n/a	n/a	<b>n/a</b>
I discovered some interesting things (from the visit today)	87%	89%	85%	91%	<b>91%</b>
A museum/gallery visit makes school work more inspiring (DCMS/DCSF2:2007: Working with the museum has been very inspiring for me)	58%	64%	68%	61%	<b>78%</b>
The visit has given me a better understanding of the subject (DCMS/DCSF2:2007: I feel I have a better understanding of the subject)	72%	77%	71%	82%	<b>85%</b>

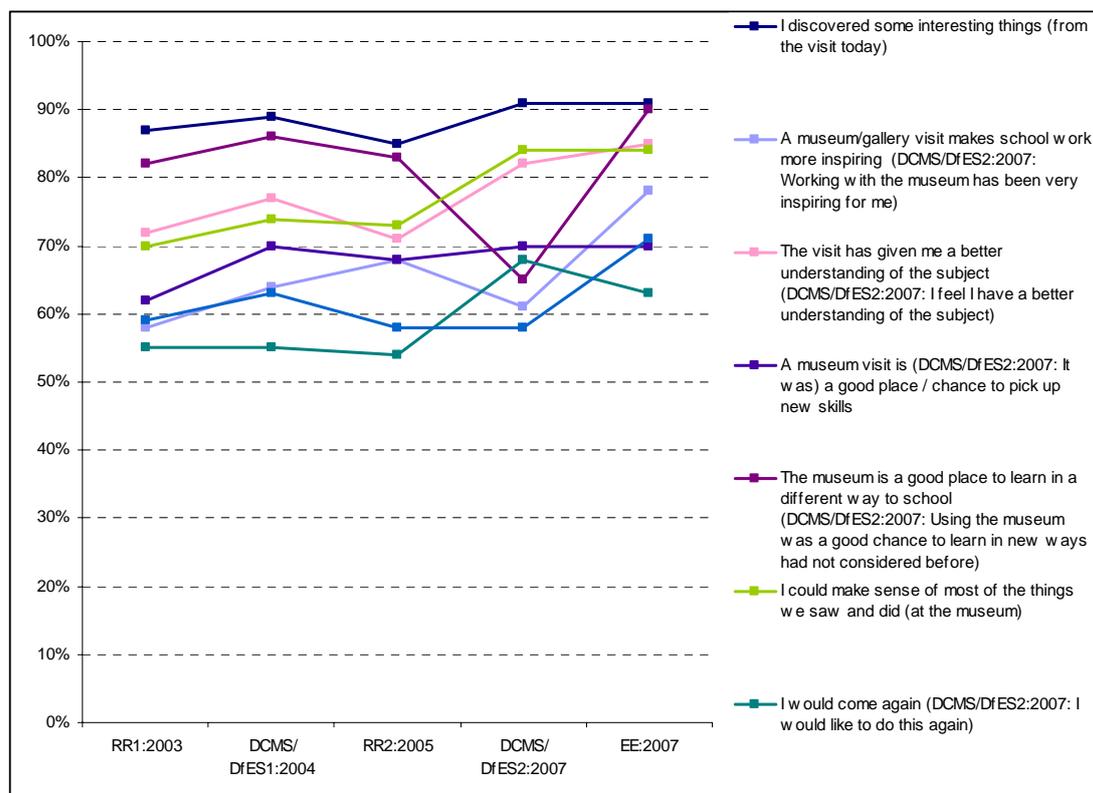
A museum visit is (DCMS/DfES2:2007: It was) a good place / chance to pick up new skills	62%	70%	68%	70%	<b>70%</b>
The museum is a good place to learn in a different way to school (DCMS/DfES2:2007: Using the museum was a good chance to learn in new ways I had not considered before)	82%	86%	83%	65%	<b>90%</b>
I could make sense of most of the things we saw and did (at the museum)	70%	74%	73%	84%	<b>84%</b>
I would come again (DCMS/DfES2:2007: I would like to do this again)	55%	55%	54%	68%	<b>63%</b>
I've left the museum (DCMS/DfES2:2007: I am now much) more interested in the subject than when I came (started)	59%	63%	58%	58%	<b>71%</b>

RR1:2003, N=3406, DCMS/DfES1:2004, N=2061, RR2:2005, N=4946, DCMS/DfES2:2007, N=3337; EE:2007, N=451

The most interesting thing about today was...

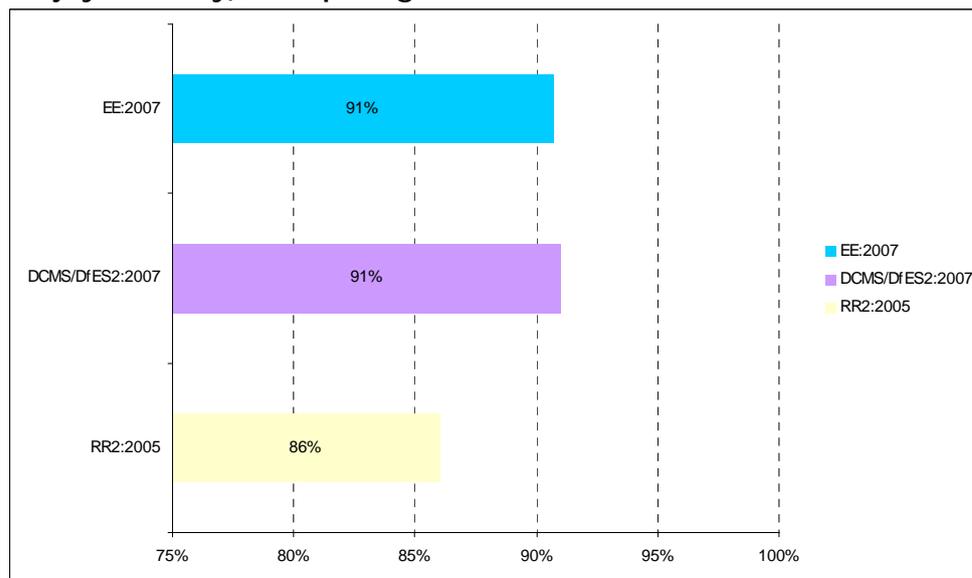
I liked and thought the most interesting part was the final discussion, you could hear different points of views and why they thought what they did

**Fig. 1.2.1b: Form B KS3 and above. What older pupils said about their learning, comparing EE:2007 with RR1:2003, DCMS/DfES1:2004, RR2:2005 and DCMS/DCSF2:2007**



RR1:2003, N=3406, DCMS/DfES1:2004, N=2061, RR2:2005, N=4946, DCMS/DfES2:2007, N=3337; EE:2007, N=451

**Fig. 1.2.1c: Form B, KS3 and above. 'I enjoyed today's visit (DCMS/DfES2: 2007: I enjoyed today)', comparing EE:2007 with DCMS/DfES2:2007 and RR2:2005**

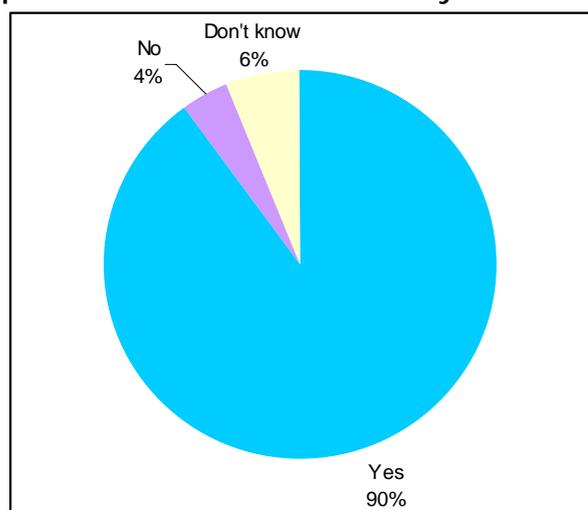


RR2:2005, N=4946, DCMS/DfES2:2007, N=3337; EE:2007, N=451

- **Museums support the needs of pupils with different learning styles**

Evidence from the quantitative data and from the case studies supports the findings from previous research studies that museums support the needs of pupils with a variety of learning styles and strategies, including those pupils who might otherwise struggle in the more 'academic' school environment. This in turn helps pupils to attain higher marks as the museum activity enables them to approach the subject in new ways. This was reflected in the responses to Form B KS3 and above where 90% of pupils completing a questionnaire agreed that the museum was a good place to learn in a different way to school.

**Fig. 1.2.1d: Form B KS3 and above. Responses to 'The museum is a good place to learn in a different way to school'**



N=449

Pupil D, a less able pupil from Downham Market High School, achieved a level 5/6 for his assignment on 'Was the workhouse so bad?' when he would normally be expected to achieve a level 4. He thought the visit helped with writing the assignment because it was a more immediate and memorable experience for him than reading about it from a book:

*'...cos it's different instead of reading out of books. You just forget it if you read out of books, but if you go to the trip you soak it all in, you never forget all about it.'*

He was very clear that the reason he did so well on his essay was because of the experience of the museum visit:

*'I think the trip actually helped me quite a lot. If there was trips on every essay I think I'd do quite well.'*

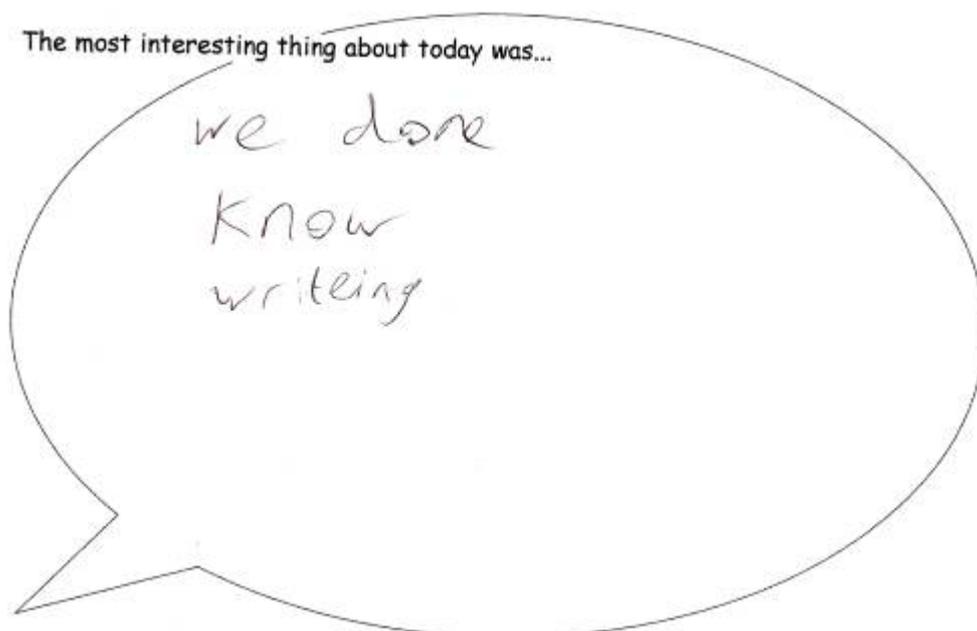
The teachers interviewed as part of the study also recognised and valued the opportunities that museums and galleries can provide for pupils to learn in ways that would not be possible to provide in school. The teacher from Rosemary Musker High School, referring to the visit to the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Art, commented that for his pupils:

*'It was a massive boost in confidence and enjoyment and in what was learnt and you can't see it in a book.'*

In the Geography session at Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse which Fakenham and Neatherd High Schools took part in, pupils were asked to debate whether houses should be built on farmland around the site. Instead of completing a worksheet, pupils instead were asked to observe events and debate with characters, to listen and state their own opinions in response to what had been presented to them. Pupils really valued the fact that they did not have to write anything and could instead use other methods of gathering information. One pupil commented:

*'It was better cos like you can actually see the people and the problem and like you can be in it and sort of experience it...'*

Pupil D from Fakenham High school in his evaluation sheet succinctly summed up the reason he enjoyed the visit to Gressenhall:



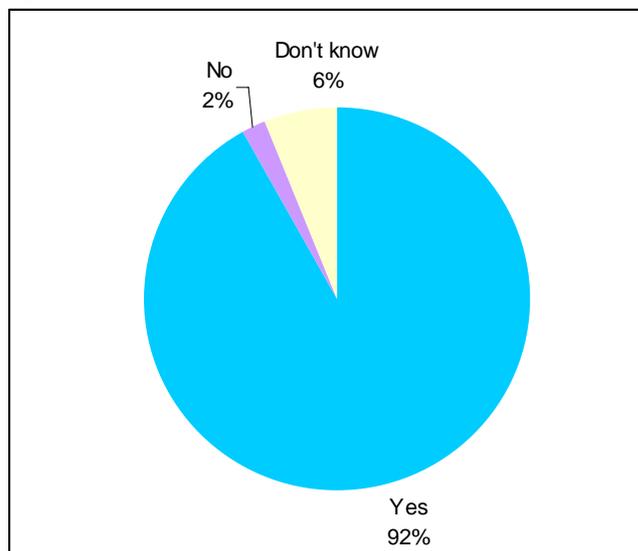
Teachers too were keen to take advantage of the possibilities of the museum environment for facilitating different styles of learning. Although he appreciated the need to focus pupils on their task, the art teacher from Rosemary Musker High School talked about how the point of a visit for him was to give pupils a different learning experience to that of school:

*'There's a studio in the [Sainsbury Centre] so instead of some tired old worksheet - I don't like worksheets, I don't like turning museums into another school-based... it's a bit like English literature when they ruin a good book by making you answer fifty questions. I want them to go to galleries, and be consumers of gallery visits and enjoy.'*

- **Museums provide 'serious fun'**

The museum visits that pupils participated in prove that learning experiences can be highly enjoyable. Of the pupils who completed a questionnaire immediately after their museum visit, an incredible 92% said that they had enjoyed themselves.

**Fig. 1.2.1e: Form B KS3 and above. Responses to 'I enjoyed today's visit'**



N=449

Many pupils talked about the fun that they had during the visit, but they also recognised that there was a serious purpose behind this fun. The fun that pupils experience helps to make learning more palatable; they are more motivated to learn as this typical comment from a pupil suggests:

*'It's fun and you're learning at the same time... because you can learn more stuff and it's like really fun what you learn, not just like boring written work and stuff. You can like go and see all the different places and stuff.'*

Pupils of all abilities in their interviews spontaneously mentioned how much they had enjoyed their visits and were keen to express this fact to the researchers. For example, one pupil from Rosemary Musker High School came up to the researcher once the formal interviews were finished and talked in an impromptu way about how much he had enjoyed the sessions in the galleries. This enjoyment seems to be a crucial motivation for young people and helps them to want to learn, providing the motivation to complete their work. With continual pressures on pupils and teachers to achieve higher standards, museums can therefore provide opportunities for pupils to develop a positive attitude towards learning.

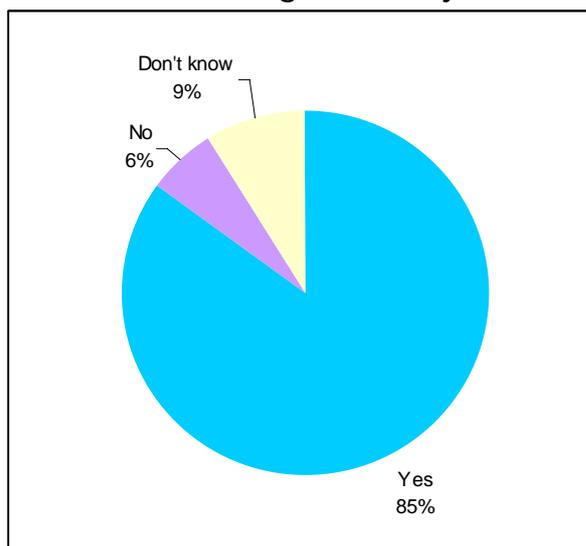
- **Most pupils are motivated to do well in their assessed work**

Motivation is the key to achievement in both formal and informal learning contexts. The evidence from this study suggests that museums offer pupils not

only new ways of accessing and engaging with learning but because once they have enjoyed the session and understood it, they think they will do better in their assessment following the museum visit. Once back in the classroom pupils are keen to demonstrate their new understanding to their teachers. This was noted by the class teacher from Manor Community College. Following a visit to the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge he noticed that there had been a very positive impact on pupil behaviour and motivation in the classroom. As well as being keener to write, and writing more in their stories, pupils who previously lacked confidence in their writing were not only showing more confidence but their self esteem had also improved.

The key factors behind this increased motivation can be inferred not only from the positive learning experiences that pupils had at the museum / gallery but also because the sessions enabled them to feel more confident about the subjects that they were studying. In the responses to Form B KS3 and above completed at the end of the museum visit, a high percentage of pupils (85%) agreed that the museum visit had given them a better understanding of the subject.

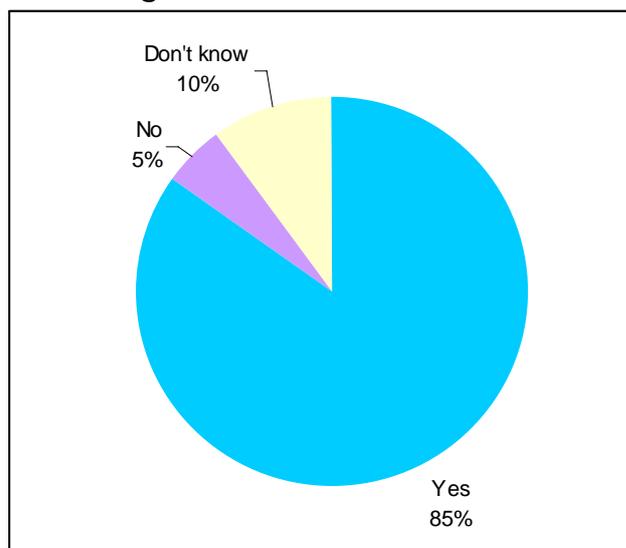
**Fig. 1.2.1f: Form B KS3 and above. Responses to 'The visit has given me a better understanding of the subject'**



N=449

A very high number of pupils (71%) also agreed that they had left the museum more interested in the subject than when they came. Furthermore, the museum content, although pitched at pupils of various abilities, was suitable for most pupils to understand and make sense of. An overwhelming 85% of pupils agreed that they could make sense of most of the things that they saw and did at the museum, with only 5% of pupils saying that they did not.

**Fig. 1.2.1g: Form B KS3 and above. Responses to 'I could make sense of most of the things we saw and did at the museum'**



N=450

- **Some pupils can become emotionally involved in their work**

One way in which museums can motivate pupils to engage with learning appears to be their ability to emotionally engage young people with subjects that they might not otherwise be interested in. This was particularly demonstrated at Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse in the '*Was the workhouse so bad?*' session where pupils were able to interact with a number of actors in role as former inhabitants of the workhouse. The actors not only interacted with the pupils but with each other with the intention of presenting young people with different viewpoints about the workhouse. The point is to encourage pupils to understand the past through stimulating their emotions. In particular the actors try to provoke outrage from the pupils by presenting nineteenth-century points of view which would be unacceptable today but using subjects that young people can relate to. As Colly Mudie, Learning Manager at Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse explains:

*'We're provoking attitudes and values and we unashamedly look at the unmarried mothers because that again is an area where students of this age can identify with and why they were treated so differently and why they were singled out for special attention. So yes I suppose it's building on their emotions and where they are at the minute in order to understand history in terms of people and in terms of the attitudes of the time.'*

For pupils who are rarely invited to debate with or question adults in their school lives, this was a new experience which took some getting used to. One of the teachers interviewed by RCMG for *What did you learn at the museum today? Second study* observed though how over the course of the visit pupils became more confident at talking to and challenging the adults that they met:

*'...as the day progressed, it was very obvious within the group that they'd gained confidence and were prepared to question. Early on in the day hardly anybody spoke and then as they found their feet and, you know, got settled if you like and relaxed and probably as they met more situations where they were getting maybe some opposition of views, they felt stronger and more able to reflect or put in word their reflection.'*

The impact of this approach on the pupils is compelling. For instance, one teenage boy from Downham Market High School with behaviour difficulties was so emotionally engaged in the debate that he became very angry when he found out how inmates in a workhouse were punished for giving food to their friends or for trying to see their loved ones:

*'I felt just like standing up and shouting, it's unfair and everything.'*

The same boy talked enthusiastically about his feelings about the workhouse and the inmates. His emotional engagement with the topic drew him into the subject and helped him to think about the workhouse more deeply than he might otherwise:

*'...it's changed my ideas completely. Cos at first I thought it was alright, but then I found it was bad with all the punishments.'*

The experience of the inmates prompted another pupil, N, to comment that she felt she owed it to them to do well on her essay, because they were real people and it would be written in their 'memory':

*'When you're writing your essay, if we hadn't gone to Gressenhall I think it would not have been as interesting. Cos we went to Gressenhall it was like it's actually happened so we can really write about it because we, like I think we kind of owe it to them people that put, like worked really hard in them workhouses.'*

Her emotional response to what she saw as the plight of the inmates enabled Pupil N to demonstrate an understanding of the complex issues relating to poor relief in the nineteenth-century. For, although she appreciated that the workhouse provided an education, she did not agree about the way in which families were split up:

*'I think it would have been horrible cos in some ways it would be good cos you're, if you had children, you're getting your children to be educated, then otherwise you don't get to see them, so it's like you're getting torn away from your family.'*

Pupils from Manor Community College visiting the Fitzwilliam Museum were encouraged to use their emotions in their responses to 'Human Frailty' a painting by Salvator Rosa in which a skeleton descends on a woman with roses in her hair holding a child. The pupils were told that the child represented the artist's own son who had died of plague and they were encouraged to empathise with the feelings that this painting must have

provoked. When they selected words to summarise their attitude to the painting and to describe it, these words were loaded with emotion; they described the roses as 'fading, unhappy and crying', the baby was 'green faced, dying, frightened' and the skeleton was 'bony, winged and terrifying.' The pupils appreciated the opportunity to think about feelings in relation to the painting, as one remarked later when asked what they had enjoyed:

*'...looking at the picture, we could express our feelings, like writing what we think of it.'*

The encouraging of emotional responses from pupils helped them in their learning because they were able to think more deeply about a subject because it provoked strong emotions. In both the examples above, subjects covered included death, illness, families split up and unmarried mothers. These are strong subjects which invite a strong response. However, the emotions provoked are then being used in a subtle way to encourage learning; young people are engaged in the subject, they take an interest and feel a connection to the subject which then motivates them to complete their assignment.

- **Pupils felt valued and respected**

Museum learning can mean independent learning; young people taking control of their own learning and being encouraged to find out for themselves. This could be seen in the experiences of pupils from Rosemary Musker High School at the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts who were able to work independently on a piece of artwork inspired by what they had seen in the collections. They were given the freedom to develop their own art works using whatever inspired them. In response to this, a teenage girl from Rosemary Musker High School wrote that the most interesting thing at the museum was:

*...being able to do whatever pieces of are (sic) work we wanted based on our symbol. When I saw the bucket man I was surprised.*

At Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse, both history and geography sessions were designed so that pupils could debate with actors in role and come up with their own interpretations and opinions for their assignments. Many pupils appreciated that they were being asked to express their own opinion or had the freedom to choose their own direction, giving them a sense of ownership of their learning. They were given the sense that the museum and the adults that they were working with valued and respected the opinions that they gave. In every case they were told there was no 'right' or 'wrong' and that their ideas were valued. Chris Dougal, history teacher from Downham Market High School, was pleased that pupils were encouraged to debate with the workhouse master and were learning to respect each other's opinions – learning to agree to disagree – as well as having their own opinions valued in debate:

*'Yeah I think some of them found it very empowering and credit to the workhouse master, he actually manipulated the group to actually get*

*them to have a viewpoint. Whether it was by voting and then asking for justification on that vote or whether it was just by being openly contentious, he actually sort of manipulated the more verbal students into putting a viewpoint forward and then justifying that viewpoint and him putting a counter argument. And at the end of it, both going away agreeing to disagree, which I think was the really interesting part of it.'*

Some pupils expressed their feelings of value in unexpected ways. Two teenage boys from Manor Community College felt that free entry to the museum indicated a lack of respect for museum staff:

*'I think you should have to pay like £5 to go in because I think it is a rip off as it is free. I think people that work there...*

*Yeah, they are putting in all that effort and they are not getting nothing out of it.*

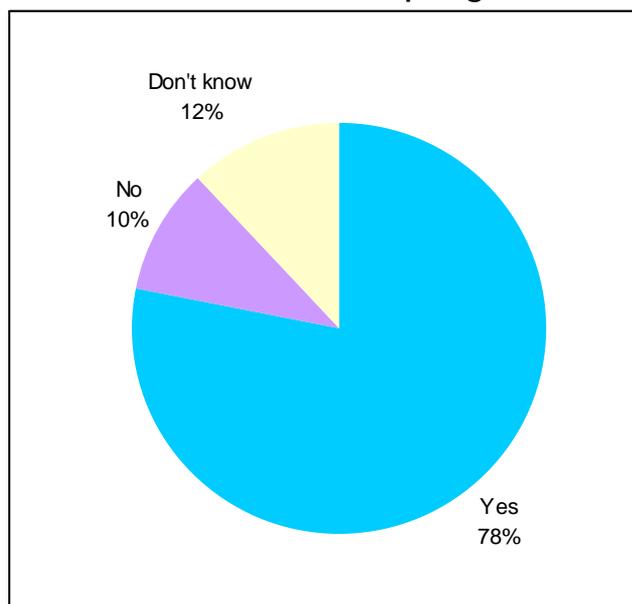
This was an issue that they felt strongly about and returned to several times. Their teacher explained that they reacted in this way because the museum and the education officer had made them feel good about themselves and had made them welcome. For young people who feel out of place in the centre of Cambridge, this was their way of expressing their feelings about this experience. They wanted to show their gratitude in a concrete way by giving money to the museum staff whom they had enjoyed working with, as one of the pupils said it was because:

*'Like they helped us more. Like we got proper help.'*

- **The museum/gallery/archive provides inspirational source material**  
For schools in the East of England using museums for an assessed piece of work, museums provided a multitude of inspirational resource materials for both pupils and teachers. This ranged from the site itself, such as Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse with its atmospheric buildings and extensive grounds, to the collections and how these could be used to stimulate learning for pupils of all abilities. The art teacher from Rosemary Musker School took her pupils to the Sainsbury Centre because they would be inspired to see and '*obviously react to works first hand.*' One of her pupils, S, talked about how she had been inspired by a ballet dancer she had seen there by Degas. It even altered her art work in that prior to the visit the ballet dancers she drew had been static figures, but after the visit she had incorporated movement into her drawings.

Pupil S's experience may have been shared by others. The majority of pupils who completed a post-visit questionnaire as part of the research study, 78%, agreed that the visit to the museum or gallery had made their school work more inspiring.

**Fig. 1.2.1g: Form B KS3 and above. Responses to 'A visit to a museum / gallery makes school work more inspiring'**



N=449

There was evidence from the interviews with pupils and teachers that museum visits had awoken the curiosity of pupils, challenging what they think and encouraging them to ask questions. One pupil from Manor Community College who liked learning about history was amazed that people in the past had created the paintings that he saw at the Fitzwilliam Museum:

*'Like it was so long ago. It's like how did they get that when they were made like several years ago?'*

Another pupil from the same class was keen to point out that the visit had helped him to see more in a painting:

*'It helps you find more in a picture – more than if you look at a picture and think that's it – but if you look at a picture more carefully you see more.'*

Working with these paintings had given these pupils greater vocabulary and more confidence in their writing, as well as giving them more to write about.

Pupil N from Downham Market High School talked about the visit to Gressenhall and explained how being in the place where the paupers had actually lived and worked helped her connect emotionally with the former inmates.

*'Yeah, yeah it felt like you were there and that at one point you do sit there and think when you're talking, a few years ago there used to be people actually working at this place and there could have been someone working right where I'm sitting and stuff like that, so it's good in that way.'*

- **The museum visit is an immersive experience**

Feedback from teachers and pupils indicated that the museum session was 'more than just a worksheet,' instead it was an experience in which pupils could become absorbed and through which they underwent a range of activities that supported their learning and, consequently, their attainment. Furthermore, the museums selected for use in this study were multi-sensory environments, utilising objects, buildings, sites and materials, and employing specialised individuals, for instance actors, artists and learning officers. These elements all combined to create rich and immersive learning experiences for pupils.

In all four case studies, pupils devoted at least a day at the museum working in depth on a subject and experiencing a range of learning opportunities that they could not have accessed at school. They were kept focused and busy with activities that were designed to help them to complete their assessed piece of work. At Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse pupils were absorbed by activities that took place both around and within the nineteenth century workhouse and brought them into contact with 'inmates' from the past (*Was the Workhouse so Bad?*), or involved them investigating a greenfield site and interacting with characters so that they could decide whether it should be developed or not for building houses ('Houses, Homes and Habitats'). The session on 'Extraordinary People and Things' at the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts involved young people working independently to produce a piece of artwork in the studio, a whole day working with the assistance of an artist and using the galleries as inspiration for their work. Finally, the 'Wordscapes' project at the Fitzwilliam Museum required pupils to spend a day working in the galleries, developing imaginative stories and poems from the art that inspired them. The immersion within these experiences, enabling pupils to concentrate on one subject or theme for the entire day with the support of their teachers and specialised facilitators, is thought to be one of the factors that enabled so many pupils to achieve a higher standard in their museum-related work.

***'Was the workhouse so bad?'* – Museums providing rich, immersive sites for learning**

- **Downham Market High School and Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse**

Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse is an example of a museum offering an immersive and emotionally engaging learning session for schools, enabling young people to experience the 'past' through interacting with actors playing the parts of nineteenth-century workhouse inmates. However for Downham Market High School, which uses the museum in relationship with a history assignment, the visit offers far more and encompasses elements of citizenship and life skills, as well as enabling young people to access culture they might not otherwise be able to access. This multi-use approach is supported by the school's ethos of desiring pupils to participate in an enriched curriculum which includes them taking part in purposeful and educative field trips which are memorable and so facilitate learning.

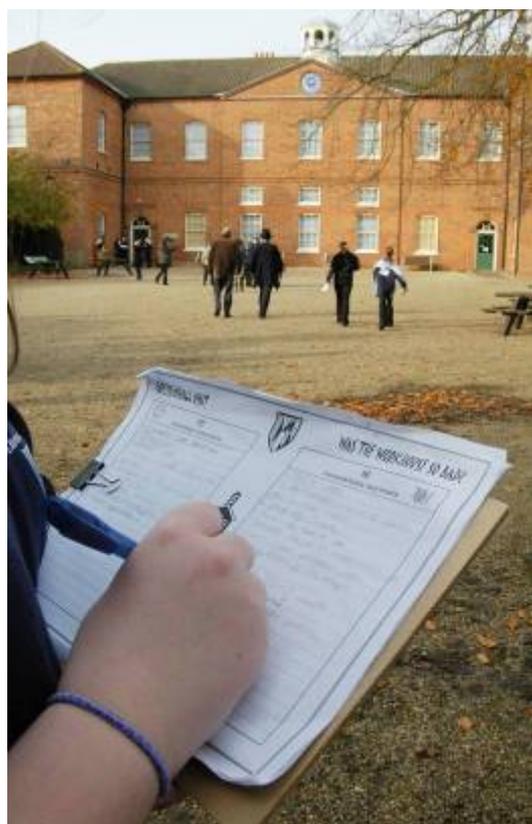
The nineteenth-century workhouse building itself is a crucial part of the visit. Pupils approach the workhouse as the inmates once would have done

through the main gates, which for some immediately creates an atmosphere:

*'...it was big and it looked like a really like dark and scary place to work. I wouldn't have liked to have worked there.'*

Once inside they meet the schoolmaster, workhouse master, and two inmates, actors dressed up in role, who accompany them to various points around the site. The use of these actors in character provides an imaginative way of engaging pupils in a subject, the workhouse and the poor law, which seems very remote from the lives of young people today. Through interaction between themselves and the students, the actors convey the complex issues of living in an institution that provided food and shelter and good schooling but which separated families, regimented lives, restricted freedoms and stigmatised certain sections of the population such as unmarried mothers. Pupils experience first hand some of the aspects of the lives of inmates, being shown the punishment area and participating in a Victorian lesson run by the workhouse schoolmaster. They experience 'the past' in a space where former workhouse inmates and employees both lived and died.

Pupils are not asked to complete a worksheet during the day; instead they have one piece of paper entitled 'Was the workhouse so bad?' on which they can note down the good and bad points of the workhouse.



Writing is kept to a minimum on the site. Instead pupils are encouraged to observe, engage in dialogue, discussion and argument with the actors, and consider the evidence presented to them for use back at school.

Pupils valued the real, concrete experiences which they were exposed to, as Pupil N explains:

*'... it made you realise that this did actually happen. Cos if you were sat in lesson and it's in a book, you do believe in some ways, you just can't get it in your head that this happened about 100 years ago, something like that. But then once you actually go there and have it explained and showed you how people lived, you do believe that it actually happened.'*

Interacting with the actors gave her the sense that she was talking to people who knew about the past; she trusted the evidence presented to her:

*'If we were in lesson, all the evidence that you've got is from books, but seeing as they got actors in who have like, know about all that had happened, you can actually talk to them so you're not, you're not talking to a book, you are talking to someone who knows what happened in that time probably.'*

Other pupils, such as S, also favourably contrasted the difference between learning about history passively from a book in school and with physically engaging with history at the museum. She felt it helped her to understand it more:

*'I don't know, that trip helped cos like it was something fun to do and it's better than sitting in a classroom all the time just keep like writing out of books and I don't know, it's better to kind of, it's more physical about the subject cos then you understand it more.'*

Because it was a 'real' experience students like C felt that they knew what it felt like to be in 'the past':

*'It gave me the experience of being there and we went to the meeting about whether they should have Christmas lunch, and it made me experience like what went on, the way different people were treated there and the sort of room it was in and the atmosphere.'*

Although some of them found it hard at first, pupils valued the opportunity they were given to question adults and to debate with them, even to mistrust or disagree with what they were saying. For Pupil D, who was motivated to try harder with his assignment as a result of the visit, he described enthusiastically the discussions he had with the workhouse master. He had disagreed with the master's attitude towards the unmarried 'jacket' women and he had felt quite passionately about it:

*'Yeah, Mr Scraggs... I was arguing with him about how they were treated and he said they were treated perfectly alright, they got their, they survived and everything.'*

Having the chance to debate with adults was a significant feature of the visit, the class teacher describing it as empowering for the pupils and something

which they rarely felt confident, or able, to do:

*'Yeah I think some of them found it very empowering and credit to the workhouse master, he actually manipulated the group to actually get them to have a viewpoint. Whether it was by voting and then asking for justification on that vote or whether it was just by being openly contentious, he actually sort of manipulated the more verbal students into putting a viewpoint forward and then justifying that viewpoint and him putting a counter argument. And at the end of it, both going away agreeing to disagree, which I think was the really interesting part of it.'*

As well as building confidence in communication and debating skills, the visit has been designed between the school and the museum to cover historical skills and concepts that pupils might otherwise struggle with:

*'I wanted them to try and appreciate the interpretations as well, which is one of the difficult skills in history and the easiest way of doing it is if you've got characters in role.'*

Coming to a balanced conclusion was another skill that the teachers were looking for evidence in the completed assignment:

*'[to make] them think about the balance, that if they do have preconceived ideas, it will have made them think well by speaking to the actors from both objectives or perspectives, it will make them hopefully think in the future that there may be more than one way of looking at [the workhouse].'*

These skills are not only important for history as a subject but are also important life skills, the ability to take evidence from multiple viewpoints and have the confidence to come to a conclusion. Furthermore teachers hoped that the comparison between the workhouse of the nineteenth-century and the pupil's lives would serve a citizenship element in the curriculum and would help to make pupils think about their own attitudes in relation to poverty:

*'Following the visit, I think it has a really quite an impact... I think about themselves and other people and the world, you know, and they do, I think during the visit they are encouraged to think and reflect and to kind of put themselves into somebody else's situation. I think they do become more reflective and they've got a lot more empathy I think. And talking to them I think that's quite clear.'*

The success of the visit to Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse can be attributed to various factors including meticulous planning and organisation by the learning officer, high quality facilitators and a good relationship between the school and the museum. The atmosphere of the day and the immersive experience with 'real' buildings and characters were significant in encouraging pupils to engage emotionally with the situations and ideas they encountered during the day and this in turn interested them and motivated them to work hard to complete their assignments. As a result of their museum

visit, 69% of pupils from Downham Market High School experienced an increase in their assignment marks, 20% achieved a similar result to previous assignments and only 11% of pupils experienced a fall in their marks.

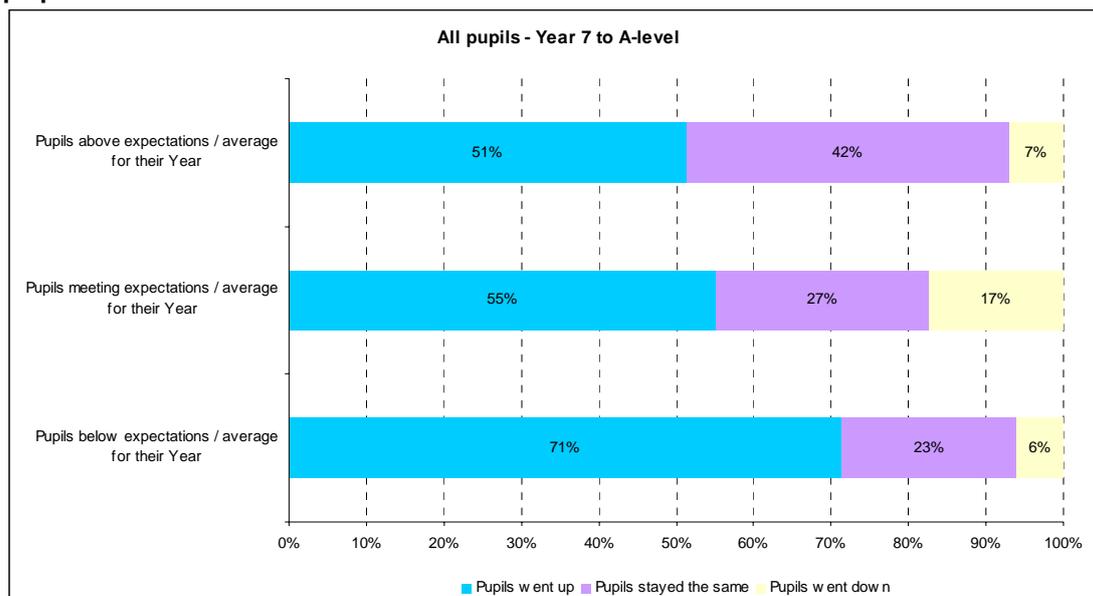
### 1.2.2 Museums motivate pupils across a range of abilities

When looking at the impact of the museum visit on pupils' assignment marks, it was possible to identify through the levels used by teachers the impact on the marks of pupils of different abilities. The link between a pupil and ability is based on the teacher's judgement and by comparing the levels given to pupils with the expected levels of ability standardized by the National Curriculum. An average was taken based on marks given prior to their museum assignment and information such as SATs scores given by schools was used along with the assignment marks. The straightforward comparisons between pupil marks based on an assignment following a museum visit and three previous assignment marks enabled a comparison for pupils based on the following categories:

- 'Lower ability' (levels awarded are lower than expected for that age group)
- 'Average ability' (meeting expected levels for that age group)
- 'Higher ability' (pupil is exceeding levels expected for that age group)

Comparing these categories of pupils shows that pupils of different abilities overall performed well in their museum-based assignments, with at least half of all pupils from each category seeing an increase in their marks compared to previous assignments. This suggests that museums are able to support the learning needs of pupils of all abilities, a finding that is consistent with previous RCMG research studies.

**Fig. 1.2.2a: Assessment marks. Breakdown by ability-related categories, all pupils**



Pupils above expectations / average, N=72; Pupils meeting expectations / average, N=459; Pupils below expectations / average, N=231

There are some differences between pupils of different abilities in terms of proportions of pupils going up in their marks, staying the same, or experiencing a fall in their marks. A higher proportion of pupils who are categorised as 'lower ability' (below expectations) experienced an increase in their marks for their museum-based assignment, 71%, compared to 55% of 'average ability' pupils and 51% of 'higher ability' pupils. Fewer 'lower ability' pupils also experienced a fall in their marks compared to the other two categories. These findings were in some ways unexpected and the possible reasons for the differences outlined above will be explored below.

- **Less able pupils motivated and engaged by museums**

The finding that those pupils classified as 'lower ability' improved in their marks for their museum-based assignment was unexpected. Teachers interviewed for the case studies had expressed some concerns about the ability of the less able pupils to demonstrate a benefit from the museum visit in terms of improving their marks, although the same teachers felt that these pupils would benefit from the museum visit in terms of their learning, for instance that they would learn something new:

*'For the lower bands it's more difficult for them to make the progress because you tend to find that they do get to almost like a level which is almost their peak. But some of them have improved, certainly in the bottom band. [In the] top band they can make that progress because they can actually get to the higher levels. Obviously with the bottom band it is very, very difficult for them to get to the high levels.'*

In understanding why 'lower ability' pupils responded so well to the museum visit we can reiterate many of the findings from earlier sections; that museums provide rich, immersive experiences for learning, that sessions are led by skilled facilitators that take into account the needs of all pupils, and that museums, with their possibilities for multi-sensory collections and sites, can cater for the needs of different learning styles, particularly for pupils who may not thrive in the more academic context of school. Furthermore, many of the sessions were held in mixed ability groups where pupils' experiences were enriched by their peers' contributions. This may all contribute to the improvement in confidence and motivation identified by teachers in their pupils on return to school, and consequently an improvement in the pupil's assignment that is related to the museum visit. Whether this impact of the museum visit is short-term or long-term for pupils is a question that must be posed in future research studies as this study is looking at the assignment immediately following the museum visit.

**Wordscapes - Museums motivating and engaging less able pupils to learn**

- **Manor Community College and the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge**

Unlike most other schools in this study, Manor Community College is in a relatively deprived area of Cambridge, with higher than average (regional and national) numbers of pupils eligible for free school meals. In 2004 the school was judged to be failing but since then special measures have been lifted and, whilst standards

remain below average, pupils achieve well. Over the last three years, the college has established a good working relationship with the Fitzwilliam Museum in the centre of Cambridge, using artworks to support and stimulate pupils' use of the English language.

During this study, three groups from Year 8 visited the museum to participate in a session looking at art works and building vocabulary, language and writing skills. A group of 'lower ability' pupils was observed by researchers which led to some concern from the museum and the school because of anxiety over the group dynamics and about possible poor pupil responses to the session. The pupils themselves were anxious about the session. According to their teacher they were:

*'...very apprehensive on the way to the museum and didn't seem to have a grasp of what they were going to do.'*

The pupils in the group all had difficulties with reading and writing, some of them had behavioural difficulties. They found it very difficult to articulate their thoughts and feelings when interviewed by researchers. Several of the group did not think that much about the museum before visiting:

*'I thought it would be dull at first.'*

Pupils had low self esteem, little confidence in their abilities, poor social skills and low levels of concentration. These are pupils which have little experience of visiting museums with their families, and who can feel out of place in the centre of Cambridge.



However, at the museum the pupils behaved unfailingly well. Their teacher was in fact *'shocked at how quickly the kids adjusted'* to their work in the museum. They quickly settled into a new way of working that involved looking at paintings and building up word banks for use in poetry and prose and produced some excellent work which surprised the teacher. Pupils were well behaved throughout the gallery sessions, focusing on the task in hand, participating orally (with the exception of one girl who remained silent) and writing enthusiastically on the sheets the museum provided them with. By the end of the four hour visit, the pupils were working on their own in silence in front of pictures they themselves had chosen.

Pupils completed an evaluation form before they left and this indicates just how much they had all enjoyed themselves and how they all felt that they had acquired a better understanding of the subject from the museum visit.

**Table 1.2.2a: Form B, KS3 and above. Pupils' responses to all questions, The Manor Community College**

The Manor Community College Year 8 pupils	Yes	No	Don't know
I enjoyed today's visit	100%	0%	0%
I discovered some interesting things from the visit today	100%	0%	0%
A visit to a museum / gallery makes school work more inspiring	70%	0%	30%
The visit has given me a better understanding of the subject	100%	0%	0%
A museum visit is a good chance to pick up new skills	90%	0%	10%
The museum is a good place to learn in a different way to school	80%	0%	20%
I could make sense of most of the things we saw and did at the museum	100%	0%	0%
I would come again	70%	0%	30%
I've left the museum more interested in the subject than when I came	90%	0%	10%

N=10

In their assessed piece of work following the museum visit, six of the pupils experienced an increase in their marks compared to previous assignments, whilst the remaining four pupils achieved similar marks to before. None of the pupils experienced a fall in their marks as a result of the museum visit.

Two of the pupils attributed their improvement to the paintings that they had seen at the museum which they felt helped them to write better:

*'Yeah, going to the museum, like, helping, like looking at a picture...'*

*'Like you describe better and that.'*

Although the pupils mostly struggled to articulate the impact they felt that the

museum had on their work, they made links to the experience which they saw as important. One pupil referred to the 'concrete' nature of the museum session, the exposure to 'real' paintings which was important to him:

*'...because it's more... When you look at it, it feels more real.'*

The majority of the pupils felt that the visit was a good place to learn in a different way from school and one boy appreciated the change from the classroom:

*'It was a day out – not in the class room.'*

The pupils also appreciated the efforts of the museum educators who facilitated their session and clearly felt very valued and respected by the welcome that they had received at the museum. They were encouraged to share their ideas throughout the day and were praised by the museum staff for their responses to the paintings. The Fitzwilliam session raised the self-esteem of lower ability pupils, provided them with an immersive and enjoyable experience and gave them confidence to begin to work on their stories on their own. All of them said that they enjoyed the visit, discovered some interesting things, that the visit had given them a better understanding of the subject and that they could make sense of most of the things they saw and did. This is an extraordinary outcome for a group of lower ability pupils who struggle daily with literacy.

- **The impact of a museum visit on 'higher ability' pupils**

Originally the intention was to observe the visit of a group of pupils from a grammar school in the region which would enable us to understand in more detail the impact that a museum visit might have on higher ability pupils. Unfortunately due to this school withdrawing from the research at last minute, we were unable to accomplish this and further research is needed to establish the significance of the following, limited findings.

In this study, the majority of 'higher ability' pupils identified from their assessment marks did improve in their marks for the museum-based assignments compared to their previous marks. However, it is a smaller proportion of pupils who increase their marks (51%) when compared with 'average ability' (55%) and 'lower' ability (71%) pupils. As more able pupils are often self-motivated learners and confident, the impact of the museum visit on assessment may therefore be less significant. The dilemma however for 'higher ability' pupils is that if they are already achieving the higher levels, how can they achieve any higher? In this respect, it is potentially not possible to measure the progress of 'higher ability' pupils through better marks for museum-related assignments. Other measures of progression may be necessary.

There are some examples of museum visits having an impact on 'higher ability' pupils in this study. For instance, one very able pupil from Downham Market High School talked about how he had also used information he found at the library and on the internet for his assignment, as he normally did:

*'I included it in as different evidence sources and I also included it to like back up other evidence to refine it all.'*

However he made the point that the museum visit provided additional evidence which he would not normally have found out and which gave him greater insight and depth into the ways in which inmates would have been treated at the workhouse:

*'I actually found a lot more about the way characters were treated because of the arguments and all the dispute about them.'*

Even this very able pupil felt that the 'realness' of the museum experience was more compelling than reading about history solely from a book:

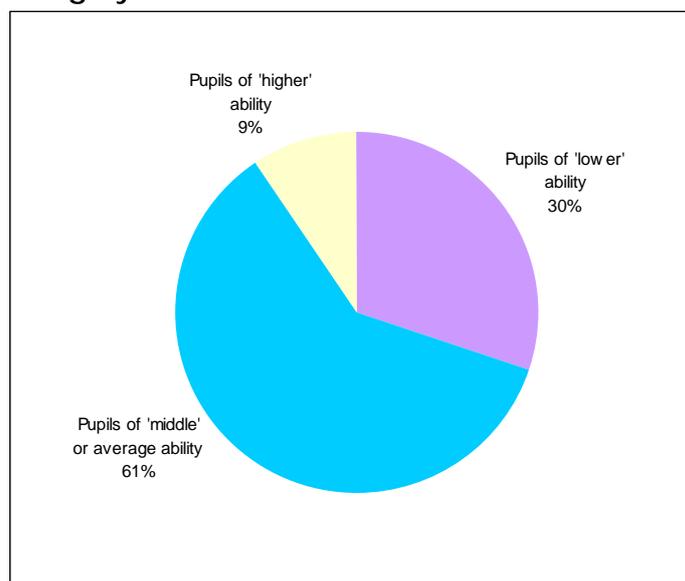
*'Because if you just read stuff out of a book, it's not really enjoyable and you don't really remember it. But if you go there then you'll enjoy yourself, you'll have great fun and it'll stick in your mind.'*

The evidence of the impact of the museum visit on the attainment of 'higher ability' pupils is therefore inconclusive. Further studies need to be undertaken to investigate this in more depth, where the subtleties and nuances of the upper levels of attainment could be explored.

- **The impact of a museum visit on 'average ability' pupils**

Based on the evidence of this research study it is not possible to offer any suggestions as to the findings for pupils of 'average ability.' Why did a higher proportion of these pupils experience a decline in their marks for the museum based assignment (17%) when compared to pupils of 'higher ability' (7%) and 'lower ability' (6%)? As we can see 'average ability' pupils make up the bulk of pupils in this research study when the categories are compared.

**Fig. 1.2.2b: Assessment marks. Percentage of pupils in each ability-related category**



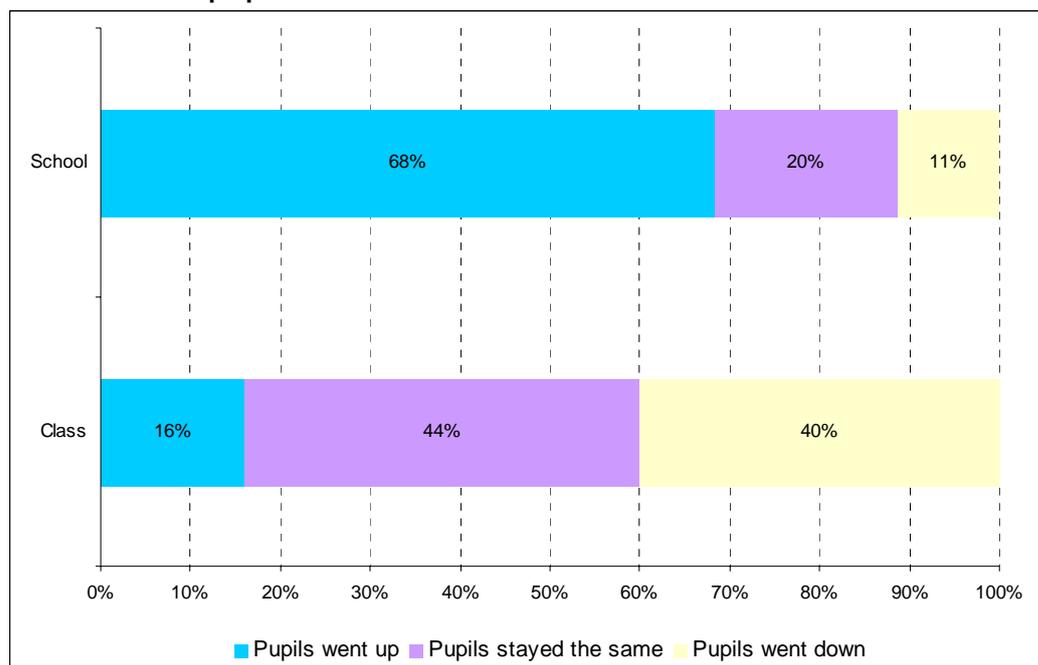
N=762

Since pupils of all abilities appeared to be motivated and engaged with the museum visit, it is worth considering why this might not always be translated into an improvement in assignment marks for pupils.

- **Teachers' attitudes and the impact on assignment marks**

One impact on the attainment of pupils that is beyond the control of the museum is the attitude of the class teacher to the museum visit. Where teachers are supportive of the immersive experiences that museums can provide, pupils are encouraged to engage with and respond to the situations in which they were placed. However, the opposite effect can also occur. During one of the case studies, a teacher was observed deliberately trying to undermine the work of the facilitators in the museum, and encouraging the pupils to take the same approach. It is interesting to see that from the evidence provided by the assessment marks this teacher's class did not achieve as well in relation to other classes from the same school with more supportive teachers. Only 16% of pupils from this teacher's class achieved a higher mark in their museum-based assignment, and 40% of pupils in this class experienced a decline in their marks compared to previous assignments. This is compared to 68% of all pupils from the school achieving a higher mark in their museum-based assignment and only 11% experiencing a fall in their marks.

**Fig. 1.2.2c: Assessment marks. Comparing the marks in the museum-based assessment of pupils from one class with the rest of the school**



Class=9% of the total number of pupils from the school (confidential)

The attitude of teachers may therefore be a significant factor in the attainment of their pupils. Where teachers are supportive of the experience and enable pupils to realise the purpose of the visit, their pupils' learning experiences are enhanced. Where teachers are sceptical and make their

scepticism explicit, this can potentially undermine the ability of pupils to learn effectively and benefit from the experience. It is also worth noting here that the schools involved in the project were aware that they were being evaluated and the teachers were in some ways being measured. Most teachers presumably, therefore, were concerned about the outcome of the project. This may have had a positive effect on pupils in that the teachers no doubt emphasised the importance of the work at the time.

### **1.2.3 Gender – boys perform as well as girls**

A consistent message from research into pupil attainment is that boys tend to achieve less well than girls, with some researchers claiming that lower achieving boys outnumber girls by three to two.<sup>3</sup> It is thought that boys may disengage from education, particularly at secondary school level, because they are already disaffected and demoralised by low attainment in primary school particularly in the core subjects of literacy and numeracy. Some GCSE assessments are also believed to favour girls.<sup>4</sup> For whatever reason, more boys tend to be relatively lower achievers than girls.

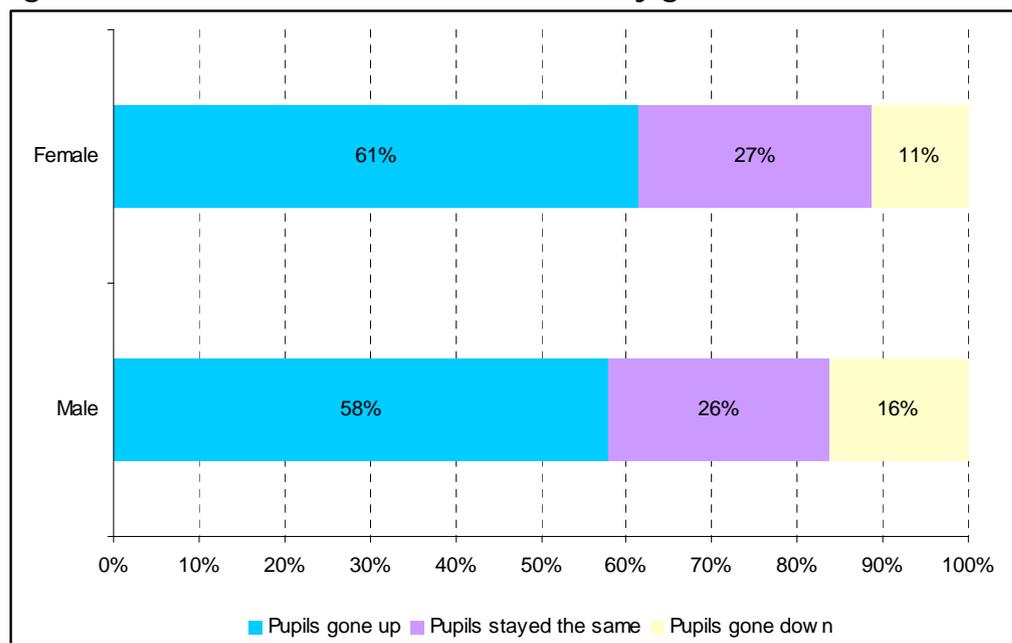
Therefore it is a significant finding from this study that teenage boys are only very slightly behind teenage girls in their achievement in museum-based assessments. For the female pupils in this study, 61% saw an increase in their museum-based assignment compared to previous marks, 27% achieved the same mark and 11% experienced a fall in their marks. For male pupils, 58% experienced an increase in their marks for the museum-based assignment, 26% stayed the same and 16% experienced a fall in their marks. It must be noted that not all schools provided the gender of their pupils. Where gender can be identified, the eventual numbers of boys and girls however are roughly similar. It is remarkable that there is little discrepancy in the achievements of male and female pupils for museum-based assignments.

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<sup>3</sup> Cassen and Kingdon, *Tackling Low Educational Achievement*, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, York, 2007, pxi

<sup>4</sup> Machin, S., and McNally, S., 'Gender and student achievement in English schools', *Oxford Review of Economic Policy*, 21, (3), 2005, pp 357-72, cited in Cassen and Kingdon, *Tackling Low Educational Achievement*, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, York, 2007, p21

**Fig. 1.2.3a: Assessment marks. Breakdown by gender**



Male, N=333; Female, N=386

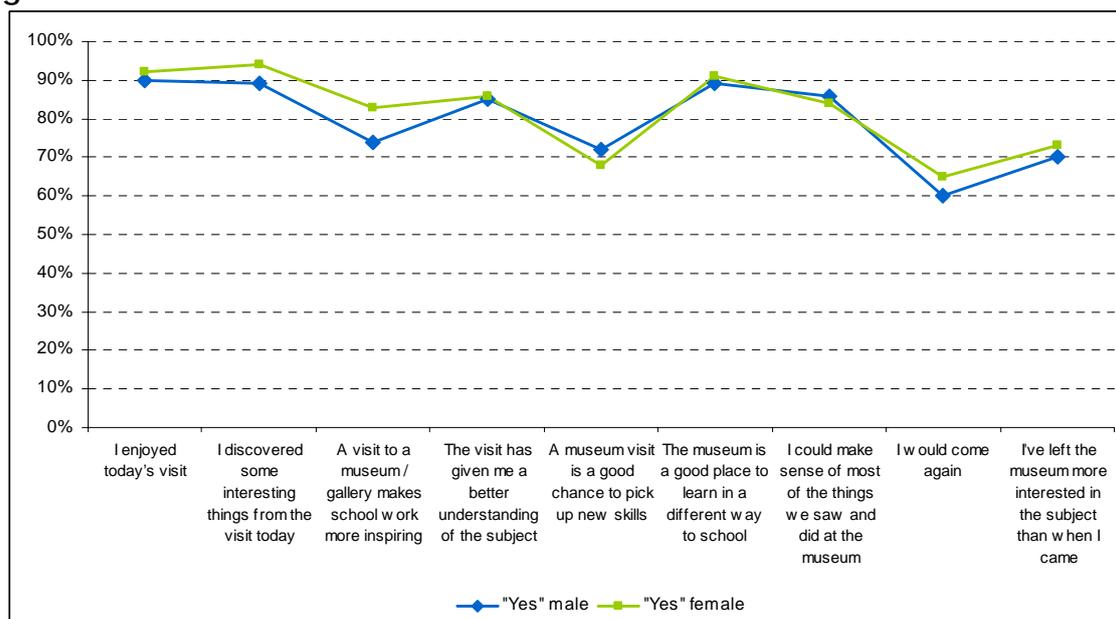
Similarly, looking at pupils' attitudes towards their museum experience from the questionnaires completed at the end of a museum visit reveals that there is little distinction between the responses of male and female pupils. Both seem equally enthusiastic about the museum visit.

**Table 1.2.3a: Form B KS3 and above. Breakdown of pupils' 'Yes' responses by gender**

KS3 and above pupils	'Yes' male	'Yes' female
I enjoyed today's visit	90%	92%
I discovered some interesting things from the visit today	89%	94%
A visit to a museum / gallery makes school work more inspiring	74%	83%
The visit has given me a better understanding of the subject	85%	86%
A museum visit is a good chance to pick up new skills	72%	68%
The museum is a good place to learn in a different way to school	89%	91%
I could make sense of most of the things we saw and did at the museum	86%	84%
I would come again	60%	65%
I've left the museum more interested in the subject than when I came	70%	73%

Male, N=195; Female, N=246

**Fig. 1.2.3a: Form B KS3 and above. Breakdown of pupils' 'Yes' responses by gender**



Male, N=195; Female, N=246

What can we make of the similarities between the achievements of male and female pupils? It has been suggested that some boys adopt an anti-education culture in schools and that this is something they can 'take refuge in as an alternative identity, placing values and self esteem in things other than those offered by school.'<sup>5</sup> If this is the case a session outside the classroom with other adults in an environment which is perceived to be fun may encourage boys to achieve more than they would normally do. This hypothesis is supported to a limited extent by findings from *Inspiration, Identity, Learning: The value of museums, Second study*. When the responses of participants from community groups to questionnaires based on the Generic Learning Outcomes were compared with questionnaires completed by pupils of the same age, it was found that participants in community events were much more enthusiastic in terms of their learning than school pupils. Although it was more pronounced for the younger pupils than older pupils, there was also evidence that boys were more enthusiastic about learning in a community context than in a school context. In Table 1.2.3a below, the areas where older male participants were more enthusiastic in their responses in a community context have been highlighted. It must be noted that the responses from older community participants include adults as well as school-aged young people but it suggests that more investigation is needed as to why, when visiting a museum, the community context seemed to be more appealing for boys than visiting as part of a school visit.

<sup>5</sup> Cassen and Kingdon, *Tackling Low Educational Achievement*, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, York, 2007, p21

**Table 1.2.3a: Form B KS3, 4 and 5 and Form Bc Using the Museum - Young people and adults. Pupils' and Community participants' 'Yes' responses by Gender. DCMS/DfES2:2007**

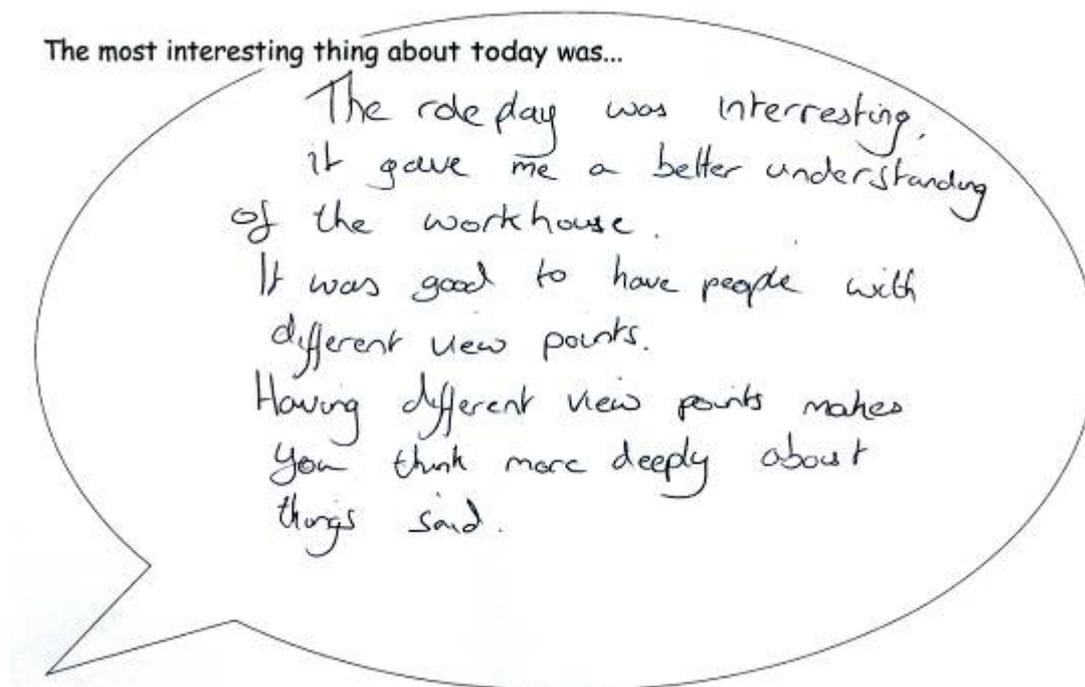
Older pupils and community event participants	KS3, 4 and 5 Pupils		Young people and adults (Community)	
	'Yes' male	'Yes' female	'Yes' male	'Yes' female
I enjoyed today	89%	93%	93%	97%
Working with the museum has been very inspiring for me	60%	62%	76%	88%
I discovered some interesting things	90%	92%	91%	96%
I feel I have a better understanding of the subject	80%	84%	78%	88%
It was a good chance to pick up new skills	71%	70%	77%	82%
Using the museum was a good chance to learn in new ways I had not considered before	66%	65%	80%	82%
I could make sense of most of the things we saw and did	82%	86%	84%	88%
I would like to do this again	68%	69%	81%	82%
I am now much more interested in the subject than when I started	55%	60%	76%	83%

KS3, 4 and 5 Pupils, N=3337, Young people and adults (Community), N=391

It may be that learning in a context other than school may be more attractive to some boys and so motivate them to get more out of it than they might otherwise at school. It may be because museum visits inspire and enthuse pupils through intrinsic, rather than extrinsic, motivation which motivates the learner to achieve for themselves rather than for external systems of validation.

Additionally, when boys reject the conventions of schooling they may not be motivated by the more traditional modes of assessment. The experiences of pupils in museums and galleries, however, are related to a range of skills that require pupils to talk, observe, empathise, and engage in hands on activities, rather than reading and writing. Pupils with literacy problems are therefore not necessarily disadvantaged. Where writing was required in the assessment in the museum it was kept to a minimum or, as in the Fitzwilliam session, pupils were supported with 'scaffolded' sessions that enabled them to build up confidence in writing using stimulus material, in this case paintings in the collections. Where writing was required in the follow up, class-based assessment pupils drew on what they called 'real' experiences that were not book based. Thus boys (and girls) who might normally underachieve because of poor reading skills were not disadvantaged by the sessions at the museum.

We can therefore tentatively conclude that whilst museum and gallery visits help motivate both boys and girls, they appear to compensate boys for some types of school learning that may disadvantage them. Museum and gallery learning therefore provides a useful tool to support male achievement in school.



#### 1.2.4 Deprivation and attainment

Previous research by RCMG has found that museums were serving an unexpectedly high proportion of schools located in areas of high socio-economic deprivation and with relatively high percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals. Pupil attainment is linked with disadvantage in the sense that pupils who under-achieve in school and fail to achieve the required standard in national qualifications may find themselves excluded from many opportunities in a society which values education. Pupils who are disadvantaged are more likely to be lower achievers, effectively trapping them in a cycle of disadvantage, as low educational achievement is linked with poor job prospects, low income and poor health.

However, this present study cannot draw any conclusions about the links between attainment and deprivation as experienced by pupils. Most of the schools have below average percentages of pupils who are eligible for free school meals, with only The Manor Community College and Downham Market High School having percentages of pupils which are higher than average for the region. Looking at the deprivation of the local area through the school postcode and linking this to the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004 as in previous studies is problematic because of the size of school catchment areas; only the postcode of Manor Community College, Cambridge, falls into the 20- 30% most deprived Super Output Areas in England, of which the East

of England region as a whole has relatively few. Most of the schools draw their pupils from mainly rural areas where pockets of deprivation are often difficult to identify as they may be masked by relative affluence in the surrounding area. As such, from using these two methods, this study found no direct correlation between attainment through museum visits and deprivation.

### 1.2.5 Tackling difficult areas of the curriculum and assessment

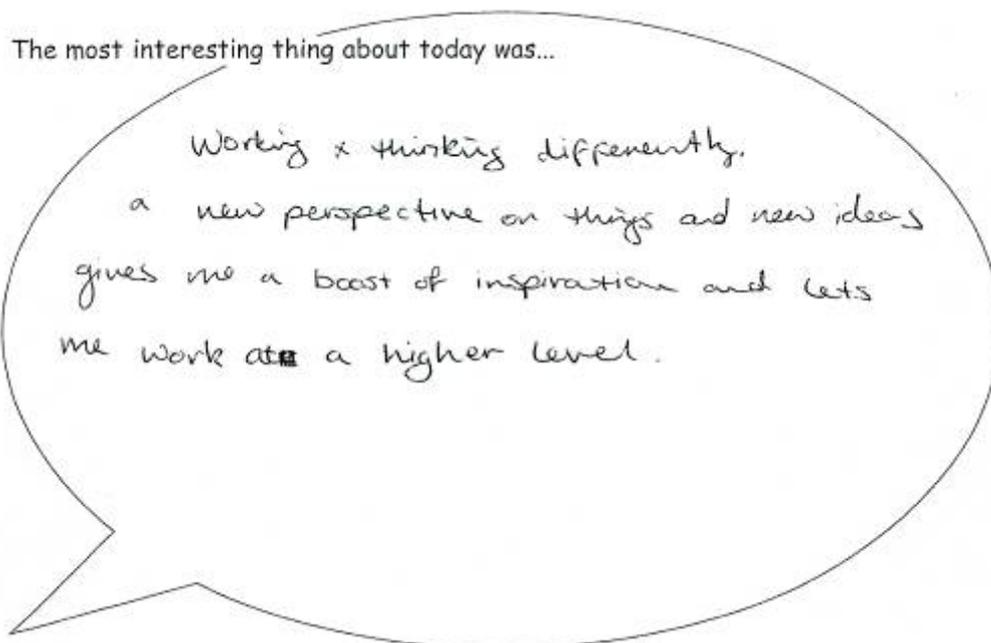
When it comes to looking at why schools use museums to facilitate particular assignments, a significant reason is to give pupils access to resources that are not readily available in schools. These can be physical buildings as in the nineteenth century workhouse building at Gressenhall or objects in the collections such as the paintings in the collections at the Fitzwilliam Museum. Museums have the resources and expert staff to support schools with areas of the curriculum that they would therefore find difficult to cover in the classroom. Rosemary Musker High School, for instance, uses the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts to help tackle an area of the GCSE curriculum in which pupils were required to demonstrate and be measured on 'their response to examples of work from other times and cultures.'<sup>6</sup> Without this visit the pupils would have used photographs whereas the collections available at the Sainsbury Centre give them access to 'real' objects. The positive response of the pupils to the museum visit and the standard of the work produced were directly attributed by their art teacher, amongst other elements, to the direct interaction with the collections:

*'It made such a difference being there because they could absorb the artefacts.'*



<sup>6</sup> GCSE Art and Design Matrix full course, p1027-1032

Pupils too reflected on the impact of the visit for their work, as one pupil wrote afterwards:



**'How important was Thomas Clarkson's role in the abolition of the slave trade?'**

**- Archives helping pupils to tackle difficult subjects**

- **Holbrook High School and Suffolk Archives**

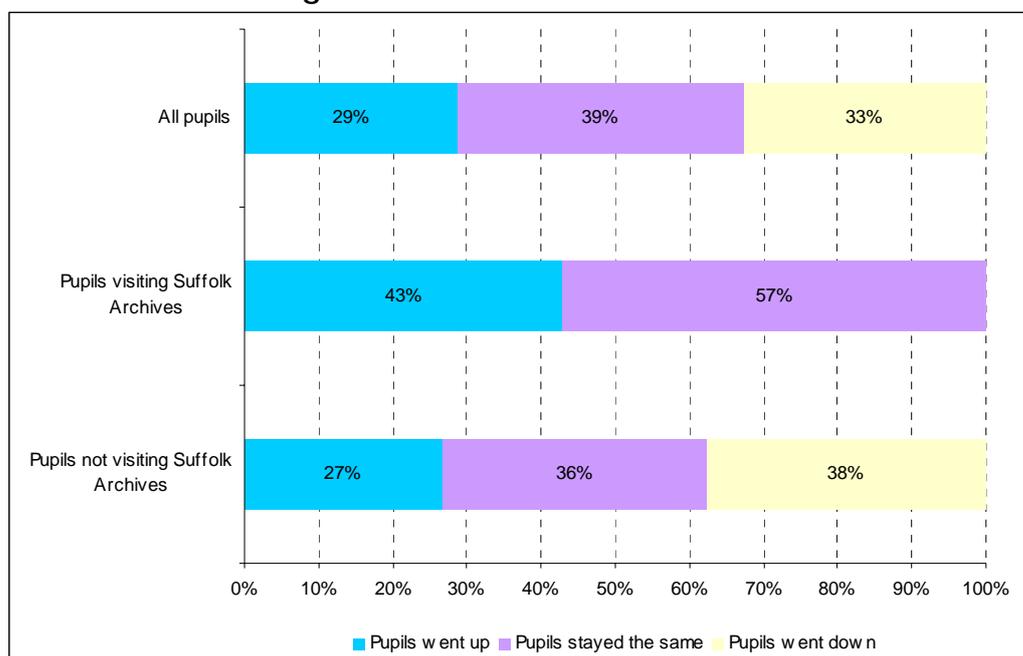
Year 8 pupils from Holbrook High School completed the assignment 'How important was Thomas Clarkson's role in the abolition of the slave trade?' To aid them in the completion of the assignment, seven pupils from across the two History classes were able to take part in a pilot extension project developed by MLA East of England and Suffolk Archives. Although it is a small example, the assessment marks provided by the school enabled a comparison to be made between those pupils who took part in the project and those pupils who did not, and the impact that this had on their assignment marks.

The assignment on Thomas Clarkson is part of a new unit looking at Transatlantic slavery, incorporating more of the history of the abolition movement. It is particularly challenging for pupils as it involves the concept of significance – how significant was Thomas Clarkson to the abolition movement – and interpretation of a difficult period in history. The project with Suffolk Archives was developed in order to address some of these issues and give pupils access to a range of sources which might help them in drawing their conclusions. Pupils spent time in the archives as part of an after-school history club and were able to look at personal possessions that belonged to Clarkson, including his diary, books from his collections and annotated speeches. Clarkson was a local man who lived ten miles from the school which helped to create a local connection in the minds of the pupils. The humanities advisor for Suffolk felt that this personal connection with Clarkson created through the archive visits and access to his personal belongings helped the young people to become more involved with his story and to understand his role in the abolition movement. It gave them an opportunity to go far deeper into his

character than would be usually possible from textbooks. From the humanities advisor's perspective, teachers also enjoyed teaching the unit using the resources from the archives, of which copies were made available to the whole year group. The history of Transatlantic slavery is a divisive topic and by focusing on the abolition movement it can help to get away from the more traditional narrative of black 'victims' and white 'heroes' and 'villains', presenting a more complex picture through Thomas Clarkson, who worked at a grassroots level and was therefore in contact with black activists as well as white.

Because of the challenging nature of the assignment, both in terms of the content and the historical skills and concepts being tested, the majority of pupils did not experience an increase in their marks for their assignment. However, when comparing those seven pupils who participated in the archives project with the pupils who did not participate, we can see that a higher proportion of pupils involved in the project experienced an increase in their marks (43% compared to 27%) or stayed the same (57% compared to 36%). None of the pupils involved in the project experienced a decrease in their marks, compared to 38% of pupils who did not visit the archives and therefore appeared to have struggled more with this assignment compared to previous assignments.

**Fig. 1.2.5a: Assessment marks. Pupils from Holbrook High School and the results for their Clarkson assignment**



All pupils, N=52; Pupils visiting Suffolk Archives, N=7; Pupils not visiting Suffolk Archives, N=45

The progression of pupils must be looked at in light of the challenging nature of the assignment which tested pupils on different historical concepts and skills to previous assignments. In this way, previous assignments are not directly comparable. However, this small example reveals the potential that museums have for helping pupils to tackle difficult and challenging subjects, both content as well as historical concepts such as significance and interpretation.

### 1.2.6 Different models of engagement

This research has uncovered a wide range of models used by museums in the East of England to provide schools with source materials and support to help secondary pupils complete assessed pieces of work. It is not the intention of this study to advocate one single 'best practice' model, and no such model was found. However, the following characteristics appear to provide good learning experiences for secondary pupils:

- Whole day sessions in which pupils are immersed in the museum / gallery experience
- Sessions planned by experienced professional museum educators and led by them or by facilitators trained and supported by them
- Sessions that are highly planned and structured, developed following evaluation and feedback from schools
- Sessions that are integrated into the curriculum and have a cross-curricular impact
- Whole year group participation.

Many of the sessions also supported independent learning by the pupils, whether it was participating in a debate with costumed actors in historical roles, choosing a painting from which to get ideas for writing a story, or using gallery collections as inspiration for a piece of artwork. This freedom was felt to be positive and beneficial for the majority of pupils. However it was thought that some pupils might not understand or not engage in the learning being offered unless it was conveyed to them what the purpose of that learning was. There appeared to be a connection: that where pupils were confident about the purpose of the visit, and understood how it would help their learning, this could translate into an improved mark for the museum-related assignment. This however is a finding which needs more exploration.

Returning to the ways in which museums can benefit pupils' learning experiences through different models of engagement, we will now consider what elements of the models used by museums and schools appeared to be important in enabling pupils to have a positive and beneficial learning experience.

- **Skilful facilitation of the school visit is important**

All the sessions were planned and facilitated by professional museum staff who were expert educators. Where they did not lead the sessions themselves they organised and trained other facilitators to take these sessions, as at Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse, or satisfied themselves as to the competence of the specialist who supported sessions, such as the artists at the Sainsbury Centre. The pupils were able therefore to take part in highly facilitated sessions where they enjoyed the attention of a range of highly skilled adult educators. Many pupils expressed appreciation of the work of these adults.

- **Museums can create learning packages for KS3**

Sometimes schools used an 'off the peg' session which had been developed by other schools such as Fakenham High School where teachers opted to use a session on the recommendation of another teacher. Thus good practice does not have to mean individual tailored sessions for each school.

- **Meticulous planning between museums and schools to develop sessions**

It is very important for museums to work with schools to establish good practice within the museum and to provide schools with what they need.

Sessions like those at Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse and the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge were meticulously planned by museum educators and the schools, sometimes with the support of advisors in the region, offering sessions that ensure pupils are engaged and occupied productively from the beginning of the session until the end. This planning was made possible because of the good relationships built up between schools and museums over a number of years. Sessions developed with the school over a period of time included the '*Extraordinary People and Things*' programme at the Sainsbury Centre and the '*Wordscapes*' project at the Fitzwilliam Museum where the school and the museum had been working together over a period of three years. Despite changes in members of staff the dialogue between the school and the museum had continued.

The sessions were very well planned in advance usually by the school and the museum together, although with the case of Fakenham High School, a package of activities was used by the school that had been planned by the museum with several other schools and an advisor previously.

Other factors that appear to be important in the development of effective sessions for schools include:

- Good communication between the school and the museum
- Commitment by the school to using the museum visit as a way of completing an assessed piece of work
- Good preparation and follow-up by teachers so that pupils are prepared for the experience and encouraged to develop their ideas back in the classroom.

#### **Museum educators and their skills**

- **The Fitzwilliam Museum and Manor Community College**

A key finding of this report is the important role museum educators play in facilitating school visits to the museum or gallery and how their skills and expertise are critical in ensuring that schools get the most out of their visit. Museum educators are recruited from a wide range of backgrounds, including pre-school, school and tertiary education. They often possess a wide range of experience which can include community and outreach working, formal and informal learning, maximising learning opportunities in gallery design/displays and managing budgets and people. In the rapidly

changing environment of formal and informal education they need to keep their skills up-to-date. They are often required to develop their expertise in new directions.

The success of the creative writing sessions developed between Fitzwilliam Museum and Manor Community College relied upon the expertise of the education team at the museum. Renaissance funding has provided the impetus for training museum educators across the region, which focused on the use of collective writing using museum stimulus materials for all key stages. Rachel Sinfield, who led the session observed at the Fitzwilliam Museum, attended a training session given by an advanced skills teacher in Cambridge that demonstrated models of teaching creative writing alongside how to use visual images and techniques as used in the classroom. In particular it provided the museum educators with an insight into what schools have to do as well as giving them confidence in working in a subject area in which they are not specialists. This training took Rachel beyond her 'comfort zone' because she was not an English specialist, but now she feels confident leading groups doing GCSE English. The training also impressed upon her the importance of prior planning with each school as it was critical for the success of the visit for the education officer to know how the work is going to be used in the classroom.

The education team at the Fitzwilliam not only use their skills to support learning in the Fitzwilliam Museum but work in conjunction with other museums so that they can share the benefits. The Fitzwilliam Museum has teamed up with Cecil Higgins Museum in Bedford to develop a session for middle schools focused on the gothic novel, which features a 'paranormal' tour followed by workshops. Rachel stressed that this system of sharing learning reinforced her own understanding of the process which benefited both the trainers and those who were learning the new skills. This pattern of working provides a model for other museums to follow.

### **1.3 Conclusions and issues for museums**

**1.3.1** Museums are amazing, imaginative resources for schools. They can be used in creative and flexible ways to support different areas of the curriculum, be used by schools seeking either single sessions or multiple contact sessions for their pupils, and they can accommodate groups ranging in size from whole year groups to smaller groups of ten pupils or less. For pupils, museums offer rich, immersive learning experiences which are enjoyable and memorable. They can inspire and motivate young people, offering experiences that are not always possible, or indeed desirable, in the school context.

**1.3.2** We began this research study with very tentative evidence from six pupils, one school (Downham Market High School) and one museum (Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse). This study takes our understanding of the impact of museum visits on pupil attainment a step further, collecting data from across the East of England:

- 5 museums and 1 archive
- 9 schools
- Up to three assignment marks from 762 pupils, including one linked to a museum visit
- 451 pupils completed a questionnaire about their learning experiences immediately after their museum visit.

What we found is that based on the teacher's judgement the majority of pupils (60%) experienced an increase in their level or grade for the museum-based assignment when compared to their previous marks. This increase was attributed to the way in which museums enable positive and beneficial learning experiences for young people, supporting different learning styles and independent learning which increases pupil confidence and motivation.

**1.3.3 Are schools using museums enough to support assessed pieces of work?** Evidence from previous research studies carried out by RCMG suggests that schools are not using museums as much as they could be. Table 1.3a shows that in comparison to other types of pupil development fewer teachers would consider using museum visits to support assessed work (61%-67%) than, for instance, teachers who would use the museum visit in their pupils subject related understanding (96%-94%).

**Table 1.3a: 'To what extent do you anticipate that the museum visit will support pupil development?' Teachers ticking 'very likely' and 'quite likely.'** Comparing RR1:2003, DCMS/DfES1:2004, RR2:2005 and DCMS/DCSF2:2007

Action, Behaviour, Progression	'Very likely' and 'quite likely' RR1:2003	'Very likely' and 'quite likely' DCMS/DfES1: 2004	'Very likely' and 'quite likely' RR2:2005	'Very likely' and 'quite likely' DCMS/DCSF2 :2007
In their subject-related understanding	94%	96%	94%	94%
In increased motivation to learn	90%	88%	88%	88%
In their cultural understanding	84%	78%	78%	70%
In increased confidence	84%	83%	83%	83%
In learning across the curriculum	85%	85%	83%	83%
In their assessed work	67%	63%	61%	65%

**1.3.4** Although a growing market, the use of museums by secondary schools is still proportionally smaller than that by primary schools. Museums could, perhaps, be more proactive in making creative connections between their resources and what schools need, bearing in mind that secondary schools are incredibly focused on the National Curriculum and assessment. Is there scope for museums to do more to support the needs of schools around assessment?

**1.3.5** There are many similarities for instance between the characteristics identified for museum learning experiences and the new secondary curriculum which museums could support:

‘The new curriculum builds on the best of the past by maintaining the discipline of subjects, but at the same time offering greater opportunities for personalised learning, addressing the major challenges that face society and equipping young people with the skills for life and work in the 21st Century.’<sup>7</sup>

**1.3.6** Museum educators too need to understand the nature of assessment and how it is integral to learning and informed teaching, and how museums can best support this. To negotiate the complexity of pupil attainment, skills and understanding would need to be developed through training.

**1.3.7** Museums in this study have made the investment to hone and develop sessions so that they are effective as possible for pupils, refining them over time and engaging in dialogue with schools so that continual improvements can be made. This investment is crucial and highlights that in order for museums to target young people of secondary age there needs to be time given over to planning and development far in advance. It is essential that museums are flexible and self-reflective in what they can offer.

**1.3.8** *Cracking Open Culture<sup>8</sup>: Strategic Commissioning Education Programme* aims to help museums develop links with schools, particularly those that have not used museums before. This initiative has been prompted by the new Ofsted Inspection Framework which reflects the increasing use of self-evaluation by schools which forms the basis of Ofsted inspection along with recent school performance data. Collecting evidence about school use of museums has to be done systematically and this research study suggests ways in which the museum visit can support the self-evaluation criteria. All four case studies illustrate how pupils and teachers were confident in interviews and in pupil self-evaluation forms as to how the pupils’ work had improved. Linking the visit to an assessed piece of work made it possible to compare pupils’ grades against previous pieces of work. Museum visits by schools therefore provide good opportunities for schools to undertake self evaluation.

**1.3.9** Collecting the evidence for this report has revealed that there are a number of nuances in pupil attainment and progression which have suggested that there is scope for further investigation, for instance, into the following themes:

- Motivating pupils of different abilities
- Attainment in different subject areas
- The relationship of gender and attainment.

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<sup>7</sup> [http://www.qca.org.uk/qca\\_12195.aspx](http://www.qca.org.uk/qca_12195.aspx) - Press release 12 July 2007

<sup>8</sup> [www.mlasoutheast.org.uk](http://www.mlasoutheast.org.uk) accessed 13 August 2007

## SECTION 2: CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

2.0	The scope of this research report	50
2.1	Research objectives	51
2.2	Context for the research study	51
	2.2.1 Renaissance	52
	2.2.2 DCMS and its priorities for England's museums	53
2.3	The development of the present research study	53
2.4	Conclusion	56

The most interesting thing about today was...

Everything I really enjoyed  
it here im going to get  
my dad to see if we come  
here again. I've learnt so many  
new things this is the best  
day of school.

## SECTION 2: CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

### 2.0 The scope of this research report

This research report is exploratory in nature and sets out to investigate the impact on the attainment of secondary-age pupils completing a piece of assessed work as a result of a museum visit. The research was undertaken in the academic year 2006-2007 with five museums and one archive and nine schools selected from across the East of England region, which between them provided results for 762 secondary pupils. It involved pupils studying at Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4 and A-level, covering the subjects of History, Geography, Art and English. All the data relating to assessments was supplied by the participating schools and the judgements made about pupils attainment is based on the views of their teachers. This study therefore gives a small-scale 'snapshot' of the impact on the attainment of these pupils following a museum visit. It does not set out to compare their experience with other types of learning experiences neither does it look in detail at the individual assessment criteria for each assignment or subject. This study therefore does not seek to be a comprehensive study of attainment in secondary education across the entire East of England region.

This research study has not sought to make comparisons with the experiences of pupils completing an assessed piece of work without a museum visit. Following a precedent established in *What did you learn at the museum today? Second study (2005)*, it takes the model used by Downham Market High School which involved the whole year group visiting Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse and completing an assignment entitled 'Was the workhouse so bad?' Schools were therefore selected for the research on the basis that the whole year group would be involved in the museum visit, although this was not always possible in practice. A further consideration is that changes in the research process because of a last minute withdrawal by one of the case study museums means that Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse is over-represented both in the case studies and the quantitative data, mainly in terms of pupil numbers because of their practice, unlike other participating museums, of accommodating entire year groups.

Attainment is a complex subject and part of the wider learning process of school which may be influenced, for instance, by:

- Teachers' aspirations and experience
- School philosophy
- Quality of facilitation
- Relationship between the school and the museum
- The timing of the visit to the museum.

Whilst this report raises interesting findings in relation to museums and secondary attainment, it reveals areas which need to be explored in greater depth before firm conclusions can be drawn.

These considerations must therefore be borne in mind in relation to the conclusions drawn from the research.

## 2.1 Research objectives

*What did you learn at the museum today? Second study* (MLA/RCMG, 2005) suggested that a museum visit could have a positive impact on the attainment of secondary age pupils when an assessed piece of work was completed as a result of the visit. This finding emerged from the experiences of Key Stage three pupils from Downham Market High School who visited Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse during their four week focus on the topic of a nineteenth-century workhouse and poor law, part of the Key Stage three History curriculum. The visit was designed in close partnership with the museum to enable pupils to gather information for an assignment entitled 'Was the workhouse so bad?' Six pupils who were interviewed by researchers experienced an increase in their levels of attainment on completion of the assignment, some going up by as much as two levels. It was felt, however, that whilst the Gressenhall case study provided compelling evidence of impact on pupils at Downham Market School, more research was needed to investigate whether this finding would be repeated elsewhere and by the same school another year.

The East of England Hub and the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council East of England (MLA East of England) commissioned this research from RCMG to investigate the impact of museums in the East of England region on the attainment of secondary-age pupils who have completed an assessed piece of work as a result of their museum visit.

The research questions were:

*What impact do museum visits have on the attainment of secondary pupils?*

- What are the teacher's objectives for the visit?
- What are the museum's objectives for the visit?
- What are the characteristics of the visit?
- What are the specific characteristics of the learning that takes place in museums, which supports attainment in the curriculum?
- What factors in the museum experience are significant and impact on the young people?

The research study aimed to include a diverse range of museums and schools from across the region, and to use both qualitative and quantitative research methods in order to gain both a broad overview and an in-depth understanding of pupil experiences.

## 2.2 Context for the research study

Since 1999, government cultural policy has emphasised the educational potential of museums and recent developments in the government's educational strategies have offered opportunities for museums to demonstrate their relevance and value in relation to learning. This study has emerged from the experience of four large-scale national evaluation research programmes into the impact and outcomes of learning in museums

for school-aged children and young people, funded through programmes initiated by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). These four studies are:

- *What did you learn at the museum today? The evaluation of the impact of the Renaissance in the Regions Education programme in the three Phase 1 Hubs (August, September and October 2003)*, MLA/RCMG, 2004 (RR1:2003)
- *Inspiration, Identity, Learning: The Value of Museums. The evaluation of the impact of the DCMS/DfES Strategic Commissioning 2003-2004: National/Regional Museum Education Partnerships*, DCMS/RCMG, 2004 (DCMS/DfES1:2004)
- *What did you learn at the museum today? Second study: Evaluation of the outcomes and impact of learning through the implementation of the Education Programme Delivery Plan across nine Regional Hubs*, MLA/RCMG, 2006 (RR2:2005)
- *Inspiration, Identity, Learning: The Value of Museums Second Study. An evaluation of the DCMS/DCSF National/Regional Museum Partnership Programme in 2006-2007*, DCMS/RCMG, 2007 (DCMS/DCFS2:2007)

These studies have generated a considerable amount of robust quantitative and qualitative data demonstrating the significant impact that museums can have on the learning outcomes of children and young people, of both primary and secondary age.

### **2.2.1 Renaissance**

The premise for the present study emerged from *What did you learn at the museum today? Second study*, a second evaluation commissioned from the Research Centre for Museums and Galleries (RCMG) by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) to investigate the impact of Renaissance funding on the learning outcomes of children and young people.

In October 2002, central government funding via the Renaissance in the Regions programme (now known as Renaissance) established the development of museum school services and community work as a targeted outcome through a framework of nine regional Hubs. RCMG was commissioned by MLA to evaluate the impact of the first round of funding on the three Phase 1 Hubs (the North East, West Midlands and South West) and in 2005, to repeat and extend the research with the Phase 1 and Phase 2 Hubs, the latter including the East of England region. As part of this evaluation, from a case study undertaken with Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse and Downham Market High School, findings emerged that suggested that a museum visit could have a positive impact on secondary pupil attainment when it was linked with a piece of assessed work written as a result of the visit. It was felt that this was a significant outcome that warranted further investigation.

### 2.2.2 DCMS and its priorities for England's museums

Through exploring the impact of a museum visit on the attainment of secondary age pupils following an assessed piece of work, an area in which there has been very little previous research, this study responds to the needs outlined in the Department for Culture, Media and Sport's (DCMS) *Priorities for England's Museums* (2006). This states that whilst museums have been very successful in promoting learning, they need to 'complete and consolidate the increased connection between schools and museums.'<sup>1</sup> One way in which museums might do this is through improving their understanding 'of what museum education work can achieve: what impact it has; where it can be most effective; and how we can best communicate those benefits to the museum and educational communities.'<sup>2</sup>

### 2.3 The development of the present research study

The premise for the present research study emerged during RCMG's second evaluation of the Renaissance funding programme - *What did you learn at the museum today? Second study* - from an in-depth case study conducted with Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse: Museum of Norfolk Life and Downham Market High School. The case study was one of three with the intention of exploring the potential differences in learning outcomes in relation to three types of school-museum relationships:

- Where the school-museum contact extended over a number of museum sessions
- Where the school-museum relationship involved a school which was a new museum user
- Where the school-museum relationship involved a school which was a regular user of museums with a well-established relationship but which was using the museum for a single session.

Downham Market High School was representative of the third category with KS3 pupils from a rural area visiting Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse for a single visit. The whole of Year 9 visited the museum during their four week focus on the topic of the nineteenth-century workhouse and poor law as part of the KS3 History curriculum. The visit was designed in close partnership with the museum to enable pupils to gather information for an assignment '*Was the workhouse so bad?*' A feature of Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse is that they use interpreters in role to conduct young people around the museum, a device known as 'theatre in education.' These interpreters offer opportunities for pupils to find out more about the poor law, presenting Victorian points of view of the causes and consequences of poverty, provoking emotional reactions from the pupils and thereby facilitating their learning.

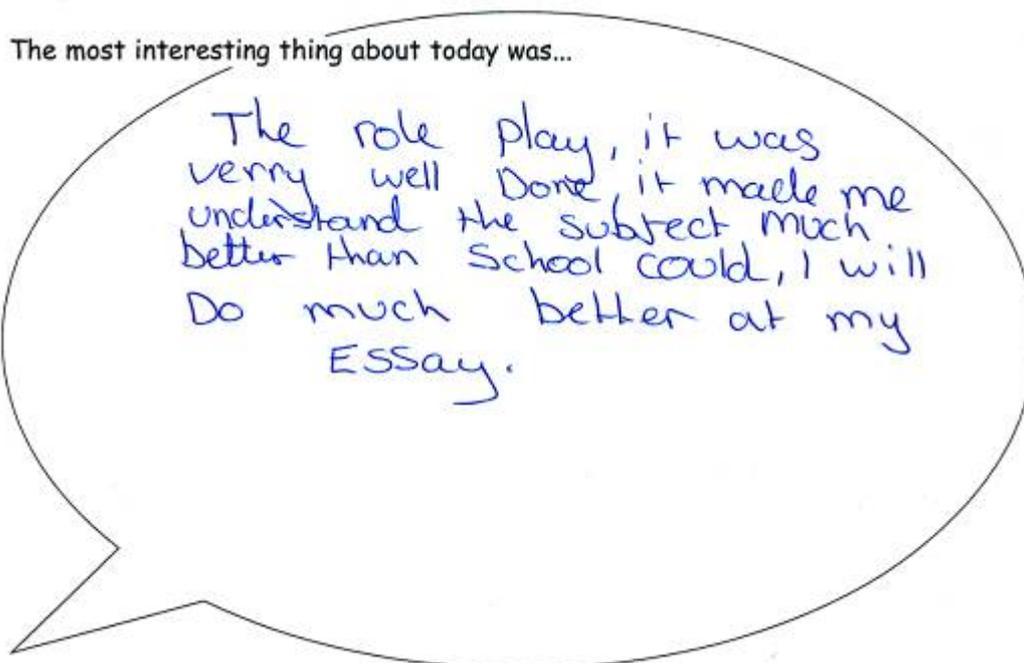
It emerged from the case study that the museum visit was felt by the school to have had a positive impact on the pupils, enabling them to complete their

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<sup>1</sup> DCMS, *Understanding the Future: Priorities for England's Museums*, October 2006, London, pp8-9

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, pp8-9

assignments to a higher standard. In gathering evidence to test this assertion two different classes were observed, a medium ability class (Class 1) and a class of lower ability pupils (Class 2). Pupils from both classes believed that they would try harder and get a better mark for their assignment, for which they could draw on the museum visit. When asked to complete a questionnaire immediately after their visit (Form B KS3 and above), several pupils reiterated that belief in response to an open question, 'The most interesting thing about today was...' The following example is typical:



After the visit, teachers and pupils were interviewed and the pupils' assessed work from the visit was compared with that of two previous KS3 history assignments where a museum visit was not undertaken, and, additionally, their SAT scores for English. For those students who visited the museum, some improved their marks in their assessed piece of work, with a few students going up as much as two levels. Table 2.3.1a illustrates how, in the case of six pupils interviewed from Class 1, all improved their standard. However, in the case of six pupils from Class 2 no such improvement was recorded.

**Table 2.3.1a: Comparison of assignment levels for the KS3 pupils from Downham Market High School, *What did you learn at the museum today?* Second study, RR2:2005<sup>3</sup>**

Name	KS2 SAT English	First previous KS3 History assignment	Second previous KS3 History assignment	Third assignment (where a museum visit was undertaken)
<b>Class 1</b>				
D	4	5	4/5	6/7
D	4	3/4	4/5	5
J	4	New to school	New to school	5
M	4	5	5/6	7/8
C	4	5/6	5/6	6/7
C	4	5/6	6	7
<b>Class 2</b>				
A	3	5	5	4
B	3	4	4	4
J	3	4	4	4
E	Absent	4/5	4/5	4
R	3	3/4	4	4
M	3	No assignment	3	No assignment

The findings suggested that there was not a simple correlation between a museum visit and an improvement in attainment. Indeed, the significance of a museum visit on learning impact was found to be the result of a number of factors. Whilst pupils from both classes had limited museum experience, in addition to these pupils being of different abilities the two class teachers also used very different teaching styles. The fact that one of the teachers had worked in partnership with the museum to plan the visit was felt to be fairly significant in terms of eventual outcomes as this teacher was committed to the idea that the museum visit was crucial to completion of the assignment.

The improvement experienced by Class 1 and other pupils appeared to be linked to the enjoyment experienced by the pupils, and their increased interest in the topic generally as a result of their emotional and intellectual experiences at the museum. Despite the disparity in attainment between the two observed classes, evidence was found which supported the teachers' expectations that the museum facilitated good learning across all ability levels. Teachers also thought that pupils with poor behaviour in the classroom were able to shine at the museum as they were in a different environment. However, when pupils' and teachers' opinions about the extent and range of the pupils' learning outcomes were cross-tabulated, the pupils had more confidence in their learning than the teachers.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Hooper-Greenhill et al 2006, p208

<sup>4</sup> Hooper-Greenhill, E., *Museums and Education: Purpose, Pedagogy, Performance*, Routledge, in press, p258

It was felt, therefore, that the Gressenhall case study provided evidence of impact on some pupils at Downham Market High School, but more evidence was needed from other schools and museums to gauge what sort of impact museums might have on secondary attainment.

## **2.4 Conclusion**

This research study has been commissioned from RCMG by MLA East of England and Renaissance East of England to investigate the impact on the attainment of secondary age pupils completing an assessed piece of work after a museum visit. It is exploratory in nature and does not seek to look at attainment in secondary education across the entire region.

The research study emerged from RCMG's evaluation of the Renaissance programme commissioned by MLA following a case study with Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse and Downham Market School which demonstrated that museums could have a positive impact on the attainment of secondary-age pupils.

## **SECTION 3: DESK RESEARCH**

<b>3.0</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>3.1</b>	<b>The Generic Learning Outcomes (GLOs)</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>3.2</b>	<b>The characteristics of museum learning</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>3.3</b>	<b>Attainment, assessment, learning and social inclusion</b>	<b>62</b>
3.3.1	Attainment, assessment and learning in the National Curriculum	62
3.3.2	The impact of assessment on pupils	66
3.3.3	Raising the achievement of the bottom 10-20% of children	69
3.3.4	The relationship between attainment and social exclusion	70
3.3.5	Conclusions	71
<b>3.4</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>71</b>

## SECTION 3: DESK RESEARCH

### 3.0 Introduction

This section presents the conceptual underpinning of the present study, drawing on a variety of published resources and previous RCMG research reports. An exploration of the literature was made to enable the research team to gain an understanding of the context in which to present the findings from the research conducted with museums and schools in the East of England, and to give additional depth and rigour to the research. It also helps us to explain, for instance, what is understood when we use terms such as 'attainment' and how this relates to wider educational contexts.

Three key concepts are explained in the following section: the Generic Learning Outcomes, used in this study and more widely across the sector to measure the impact of museums on learning outcomes; the characteristics of museum learning, drawing on previous experiences from RCMG research; and the relationship of attainment to learning and social exclusion.

### 3.1 The Generic Learning Outcomes (GLOs)

Taking the model used in *What did you learn at the museum today? Second study*, the present study supports and builds upon the findings of the Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse / Downham Market High School case study by using similar research methods developed around the concept of the Generic Learning Outcomes (GLOs). Developed by MLA and RCMG through the Learning Impact Research Project (LIRP), five broad categories of learning outcomes have been identified:

- Knowledge and Understanding
- Skills
- Enjoyment, Inspiration, Creativity
- Attitudes and Values
- Action, Behaviour, Progression

Increasingly used across the museum sector, the GLOs' approach has been used successfully by RCMG to shape four national, large-scale research studies. These have demonstrated that the GLOs can be used to provide numerical data but also to convey the complexities of museum-based learning for, whilst individual GLOs can be readily identified, in practice they are closely interwoven. Together these previous RCMG research studies have enabled the connections between each of the generic learning outcomes to be explored in more detail and facilitated the development of an in-depth understanding of the characteristics of museum learning. As a conceptual framework therefore, the GLOs have proved more than adequate to describe and analyse the dimensions of learning as experienced by children, young people and adult users of museums, both in an educational and a community context.

This present research study uses the GLOs both to structure the research methods to assess the impact upon the attainment of secondary-age pupils undertaking an assignment as a result of a museum visit, and to nest the findings from this study within a wider body of evidence from previous research studies so that useful comparisons can be made.

### 3.2 The characteristics of museum learning

Nesting this East of England research study within the larger body of evidence provided by previous RCMG evaluations enables us to draw on the conclusions made about the characteristics of museum learning based on the findings from these studies. Consistently across all four research studies the evidence from pupils and teachers strongly supports the view that museums can have a significant impact on learning outcomes, generating positive and memorable experiences for many individuals. It has been found that museum-based learning is ideally placed to support a complex and layered approach to learning which enables learners of all kinds to benefit, for museum learning does not only involve the intellect but it can be physical and engage both the senses and emotions.<sup>1</sup> Of considerable importance here is the link between enjoyment and learning. Evidence from teachers and pupils of all ages confirms repeatedly that museum visits are enjoyable and inspiring, that they arouse interest and thus provoke learning. Teachers were very explicit about the causal link between them, the way in which enjoyment opens children and young people up to learning and gives them a heightened state of awareness.

*'Enjoyment leads to motivation [which] leads to learning.'*<sup>2</sup>

*What did you learn at the museum today? Second study* identified that teachers and pupils valued the emotional engagement that museums can facilitate. An emotional response was felt to stimulate the attainment of knowledge and understanding and the development of attitudes and values, and was something which was felt to be achievable for all pupils, regardless of ability or background. The encouragement of an emotional response was illustrated to good effect by the experience of the pupils of Downham Market High School at Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse where the 'theatre in education' actors tried to provoke them into a response through the presentation of nineteenth-century points of view unacceptable to modern audiences. In this way, pupils would be encouraged to think critically about the arguments for and against the workhouse for their assignment. As one of the actors explained:

*'I try to make them angry.... And then if it works, they argue with me as the Workhouse master.... I mean this whole concept of fun isn't necessarily what we're about, it should be engaging and challenging.'*

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<sup>1</sup> Hooper-Greenhill, 2007, p8, p261

<sup>2</sup> Teacher quoted in Hooper-Greenhill et al, *What did you learn at the museum today? Second study*, RCMG/MLA, 2006, p169

Another significant factor is that museums facilitate concrete experiences where 'facts' are made real. Instead of information being mediated through a book or a teacher, pupils can often interact in a personal, direct way with material culture and collections. This allows for a 'personalised' response from pupils which appears to be highly significant in stimulating learning and can often lead to ownership of that experience. For older pupils this can contrast favourably to learning at school, for at the museum:

'...intellectual challenge combined with emotional engagement in a rich and new environment enables teenagers to go beyond their accustomed reticence.'<sup>3</sup>

Currently the educational agenda has an emphasis on creativity and museums are seen by many pupils and teachers as places where creativity can flourish. Much museum-based teaching is itself creative, using a range of skills and strategies that harness the enquiry and enthusiasm of pupils. Furthermore, the planning and development of museum-based workshops are often designed to promote creative responses in pupils. In the open and supportive environment created, new ideas are generated and experiences can be inspirational, imaginative and purposeful. Where contact between the school and the museum is sustained, pupils have the potential to develop ideas, themes and skills in more depth:

'Sustained contact allows pupils to develop their learning in a more reflective manner and incrementally.'<sup>4</sup>

From the research studies undertaken for MLA, DCMS and DCSF, it emerges that museums predominantly take a learner-centred approach, and participants are found to be engaged in active meaning making. Using museum displays and collections, children and young people are encouraged to make connections and see relationships unfold. Museum experiences can stimulate the imagination, encouraging pupils to ask questions and develop skills which enable critical reflection:

*'A museum visit develops skills of analysis and evaluation; it's your real high order kind of skills... of synthesis of different arguments and comparison.'*<sup>5</sup>

Museum experiences are immersive, enabling pupils to achieve what Csikszentmihalyi calls a 'state of flow.' This is characterised by an absorption in the task at hand, and a "spontaneous, almost automatic"<sup>6</sup> response from the pupil, who is motivated to take part. Achieving this 'state of flow' can result in a beneficial, and intense, learning experience:

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<sup>3</sup> Hooper-Greenhill et al 2006, p226

<sup>4</sup> Hooper-Greenhill et al, *Inspiration, Identity, Learning: The value of museums, Second study*, RCMG/DCMS, 2007, p13

<sup>5</sup> Teacher quoted in Hooper-Greenhill et al, *What did you learn at the museum today? Second study*, RCMG/MLA, 2006, p101

<sup>6</sup> Csikszentmihalyi, M, and Hermanson, K., 'Intrinsic motivation in museums: why does one want to learn?' in Hooper-Greenhill, E. (ed), *The Educational Role of the Museum*, Second edition, Routledge, Abingdon, 1994, p150

'[Involved in the flow] of events and the flow of their own spontaneous responses, pupils increased their efforts, tried harder, were tolerant where they did not understand at once, and reached levels of achievement that surprised and pleased themselves and their teachers.'<sup>7</sup>

Whilst visitors to museums respond in different ways depending on their prior knowledge, personal interests and learning styles, the overwhelming evidence from previous RCMG research is that children and young people from all backgrounds and circumstances are able to flourish in museum-based activities and workshops. For pupils who struggle within the school environment this is particularly beneficial. It has been identified that a key issue in low achievement may be 'the lack in the system of forms of education that engage every child – and make them feel good about themselves and the place they are studying in.'<sup>8</sup> Museums, on the other hand, are often multi-sensory environments, utilising objects, buildings, sites and materials, and employing specialised individuals for instance actors, artists, curators and scientists. Through choosing from the array of learning styles on offer, pupils can respond in ways which confirm their preferred learning strategies, some of which are not always validated in classroom situations. This might be through physical activity, object handling, drawing, drama, group discussion, questioning, debate and team-work. Museums can also, therefore, offer experiences which would not otherwise be available, or desirable, in the classroom environment. Pupils who underachieve in school may 'suddenly' improve during a museum activity precisely because of the variety of learning styles, and experiences, on offer.<sup>9</sup>

However, of considerable importance to the effectiveness of museum learning is the skill and expertise of museum educators. The most valuable and rich learning experiences for pupils are obtainable where museum educators are highly skilled at teaching for multiple personalised outcomes, adopting an open-ended, enquiry-based and activity-led approach. Furthermore, museum sessions provide pupils with enjoyment in an unthreatening environment, and this is something that skilled educators can provide.<sup>10</sup>

In summary, museums have demonstrated their potential to be rich, supportive, learner-centred environments which provide considerable opportunities for pupils of all ages, backgrounds and abilities to make meaning actively and take ownership of their own learning. This appears to be most successful where skilful museum educators provide a range of learning styles which young people can respond to, and the enjoyment and inspiration experienced during the museum visit facilitate knowledge and understanding and stimulate an emotional response which becomes memorable for the pupil. In this way we can see that museum-based

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<sup>7</sup> Hooper-Greenhill, 2007, p256

<sup>8</sup> Cassen, R. and Kingdon, G., *Tackling low educational achievement*, Joseph Rowntree Foundation and London School of Economics, 2007, p21

<sup>9</sup> Hooper-Greenhill, 2007, p259

<sup>10</sup> Edwards and Knight, 1994, p3, cited in Hooper-Greenhill, 2007, p257

learning goes beyond the learning of 'facts' to have an impact on the shaping of an individual's self-identity:

'If culture is understood as a process of signification, a means of producing meaning that shapes world views, then learning in museums and other cultural organisations is potentially dynamic and profound, producing self identities.'<sup>11</sup>

### **3.3 Attainment, assessment, learning and social inclusion**

A key term used in this research study is 'attainment.' In the National Curriculum, attainment is measured through assessment of pupils, with formal, standard testing taking place at various stages of a pupil's school career and continuous assessment in the classroom by teachers which may be measured in a number of different ways. This research study focuses on the impact of attainment of secondary age pupils in an assessed piece of work as the result of a museum visit (where the assignment is set by the school or suggested by the museum and marked to the school's own standards) rather than the attainment of secondary pupils in general. However, in order to deepen our understanding of the issues surrounding attainment, particularly the impact that assessment can have on the learning experience of the pupil, the following piece of desk research was carried out.

This section begins by describing the two different approaches to assessment and how this relates to attainment in the curriculum. It describes the impact that assessment can have on pupils and establishes the relationship between assessment and the motivation, confidence and self-worth of pupils. Individual achievement in the education system is also perceived as the most effective route out of poverty and disaffection, so the link that can be made between attainment and social inclusion has been highlighted.

#### **3.3.1 Attainment, assessment and learning in the National Curriculum**

In the National Curriculum the achievement of pupils is measured in relation to 'attainment targets', described as the 'knowledge, skills and understanding which pupils of different abilities and maturities are expected to have by the end of each key stage.'<sup>12</sup> Pupils are tested through national tests at the end of the Key stages 1, 2 and 3 which give a snapshot of pupil progress in the core subjects of English, Mathematics and Science (key stages 2 and 3 only).<sup>13</sup> At Key stage 4, pupil attainment is measured through a system of national qualifications, with most pupils taking GCSEs in a number of subjects.<sup>14</sup> Table 1 below summarises the relationship between age, key stage and the type of formal assessment given.

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<sup>11</sup> Hooper-Greenhill, 2007, p18

<sup>12</sup> As defined by the Education Act 1996, section 353a, National Curriculum Online, <http://www.nc.uk.net/nc/contents/posandatt.htm> [accessed 19 09 2007]

<sup>13</sup> Secondary schools achievement and attainment tables, DCSF, 2006, [http://www.dfes.gov.uk/performance/tables/ks3\\_06/k5.shtml](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/performance/tables/ks3_06/k5.shtml) [accessed 19 09 2007]

<sup>14</sup> From National Curriculum Online, <http://www.nc.uk.net/nc/contents/posandatt.htm> [accessed 19 09 2007]

**Table 1: Relationship of key stages and type of formal assessment<sup>15</sup>**

Age	Key stage	Year	Test / Qualifications
3-5	Foundation	Reception	
5-6	Key stage 1	Year 1	National tests and tasks in English and Mathematics
6-7		Year 2	
7-8	Key stage 2	Year 3	National tests in English, Mathematics and Science
8-9		Year 4	
9-10		Year 5	
10-11		Year 6	
11-12	Key stage 3	Year 7	National tests in English, Mathematics and Science
12-13		Year 8	
13-14		Year 9	
14-15	Key Stage 4	Year 10	Some pupils take GCSEs Most pupils take GCSEs or other national qualifications
15-16		Year 11	
16-17	Post-compulsory education and/or training	Year 12 (College Year 1)	Learning programmes leading to general, vocationally-related and occupational qualifications e.g. A-level, vocational A-level, NVQ, modern apprenticeship
17-18		Year 13 (College Year 2)	
18-19			

Attainment targets consist of eight level descriptions detailing the range of types of performance that pupils of each level should be expected to demonstrate. These level descriptions form the basis for judgements made about pupil progress and can indicate whether a pupil is working to the level expected, or is above or below the average. Table 2 shows the levels that pupils can be expected to demonstrate as tested at the end of each Key stage.

**Table 2: Comparison of expected level for pupils at the end of Key stages 1, 2 and 3<sup>16</sup>**

Level	7 years	11 years	14 years
Level 8*			
Level 7			
Level 6			
Level 5			
Level 4			
Level 3			
Level 2a, 2b, 2c			
Level 1			

Key to shading	
Exceptional	
Beyond expectations	
At level expected	
Below expectations	

\* KS3 pupils can gain Level 8 in mathematics only. Level 7 is the highest available in the KS3 English and science tests.

<sup>15</sup> Adapted from [http://www.qca.org.uk/qca\\_7125.aspx](http://www.qca.org.uk/qca_7125.aspx) [accessed 19 09 2007]

<sup>16</sup> Adapted from [http://www.dfes.gov.uk/performance/tables/ks3\\_06/k5.shtml](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/performance/tables/ks3_06/k5.shtml) [accessed 19 09 2007]

Each subject taught at secondary level has its own set of attainment targets and level descriptions which will vary since each subject has its own distinct set of concepts and skills to master. Therefore, a level 5 in English is not, for instance, directly comparable to a level 5 in Science.

Attainment as measured through assessment gives a 'snapshot' of a pupil's performance at a given point in time and is an ongoing process.<sup>17</sup> Alongside standard, formal testing pupils are continuously assessed throughout their time in school; judgements are made about their learning by teachers through assignments and other set tasks. The assessed piece of work relates to learning outcomes which provide a required standard against which both teachers and pupils can measure progress.<sup>18</sup> Pupils can understand what they have achieved and what they need to work on in the future. In this way, assessment forms the basis of informed teaching, because it builds on what the pupil has already learned and can help pupils in overcoming their limitations and difficulties.<sup>19</sup>

Assessment has the twofold purpose in that it not only records what has been achieved by pupils but it can be used as a tool to promote learning.<sup>20</sup> Although both approaches are critical for ensuring standards of assessment are maintained, in practice there is tension between them because of their very different purposes.<sup>21</sup> Where achievement is recorded - 'assessment of learning' - it is associated with judgements made based on standardized tests, grades and ranking systems. Here assessment is concerned with describing and labelling learning for purposes of public accountability rather than the needs of the learner.

'Assessment for learning' on the other hand promotes the use of assessment as a tool for learning. It focuses more on the needs of the learner and helping them to identify the next steps they need to take in order to make progress in their learning.<sup>22</sup> For assessment to be effective as a tool for learning, pupils need to understand the goals that they are pursuing. They should be made aware of the 'how' of learning as well as the 'why.' In this context,

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<sup>17</sup> CEA@Islington Quality Statement on assessment practice (secondary), July 2003, Issue 2,  
[http://www.qca.org.uk/libraryAssets/media/assessment\\_practice\\_secondary.pdf](http://www.qca.org.uk/libraryAssets/media/assessment_practice_secondary.pdf)  
[accessed 19 09 2007]

<sup>18</sup> Hooper-Greenhill, E. *Museums and Education: Purpose, Pedagogy, Performance*, Routledge, 2007, in press, p43

<sup>19</sup> Ofsted, 2003, in CEA@Islington Quality Statement on assessment practice (secondary), July 2003, Issue 2,  
[http://www.qca.org.uk/libraryAssets/media/assessment\\_practice\\_secondary.pdf](http://www.qca.org.uk/libraryAssets/media/assessment_practice_secondary.pdf)  
[accessed 19 09 2007]

<sup>20</sup> Weeden, Winter and Broadfoot, 2002

<sup>21</sup> CEA@Islington Quality Statement on assessment practice (secondary), July 2003, Issue 2,  
[http://www.qca.org.uk/libraryAssets/media/assessment\\_practice\\_secondary.pdf](http://www.qca.org.uk/libraryAssets/media/assessment_practice_secondary.pdf)  
[accessed 19 09 2007]

<sup>22</sup> CEA@Islington Quality Statement on assessment practice (secondary), July 2003, Issue 2,  
[http://www.qca.org.uk/libraryAssets/media/assessment\\_practice\\_secondary.pdf](http://www.qca.org.uk/libraryAssets/media/assessment_practice_secondary.pdf)  
[accessed 19 09 2007]

assessment is made through a series of tasks and questions which prompt the pupil to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and skills. Their response is observed and interpreted by the teacher and judgements are made as to how learning can be improved.

'Assessment that encourages learning fosters motivation by emphasising progress and achievement rather than failure.'<sup>23</sup>

'Assessment for learning' takes the premise that for effective learning to take place, learners need to know what it is they are trying to achieve. It aims at developing the learner's capacity for self-reflection and for them to become independent in their learning:

'Teachers should equip learners with the desire and the capacity to take charge of their learning through developing the skills of self-assessment.'<sup>24</sup>

It is recognised that particular kinds of skills and expertise are required in teachers to ensure that assessment is used in a manner which encourages progression and independence, including:

- Effective planning for assessment within the curriculum
- Observation of learning
- Analysis and interpretation of evidence of learning
- Giving constructive feedback to learners
- Supporting learners in their self assessment.

Pupil attainment is a concern for wider society with the publishing of results in national tests used as a means of ensuring public accountability and enabling comparisons to be made in the school league tables. Attainment is not only therefore a measure of pupil performance but is a means to evaluate school performance. Schools are encouraged to ensure that assessment is carefully measured, well recorded and used to inform school policy, along with the promotion of an 'achievement culture.' In this context, pupil attainment as measured by formal assessments impacts not only on the pupils themselves but reflects upon the schools they attend and their teachers.

### **3.3.2 The impact of assessment on pupils**

Good practice in assessment suggests that pupils will progress most 'if they understand the aim of their learning, where they are in relation to this aim and how they can achieve the aim (or close the gap in their knowledge).'

Where assessment is used effectively, the impact on pupils can be beneficial. It can:

- Raise standards of attainment and behaviour

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<sup>23</sup> The ten principles: Assessment for learning, [http://www.qca.org.uk/qca\\_4336.aspx](http://www.qca.org.uk/qca_4336.aspx) [accessed 19 09 2007]

<sup>24</sup> The ten principles: Assessment for learning, [http://www.qca.org.uk/qca\\_4336.aspx](http://www.qca.org.uk/qca_4336.aspx) [accessed 19 09 2007]

<sup>25</sup> Assessment for learning, Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, [http://www.qca.org.uk/qca\\_4334.aspx](http://www.qca.org.uk/qca_4334.aspx) [accessed 19 09 2007]

- Improve pupil attitudes and response
- Enable the active involvement of pupils in their own learning
- Promote pupil self-esteem through a shared understanding of the learning process.<sup>26</sup>

There are different impacts on the pupil depending on the approach to assessment taken. Both place an emphasis however on the pupil being aware of their progress in relation to external prompts, whether individually with the teacher or against national standards.

**Table 3: Impact on the pupil comparing 'assessment for learning' with 'assessment of learning'**<sup>27</sup>

Assessment <i>for</i> learning	Assessment <i>of</i> learning
<p>The pupil will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Know what to do to improve</li> <li>• Know what standards are required of them</li> <li>• Know what they have achieved against known success criteria and what they can do next</li> <li>• Gain confidence, self-esteem and motivation as a learner</li> <li>• Improve their self-evaluation skills</li> <li>• Make progress in their learning</li> </ul>	<p>The pupil will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be able to gauge their own performance in comparison to others and previous performance</li> <li>• Be able to measure their own performance against externally agreed criteria and standards</li> <li>• Have a measure of performance at specific milestones in life</li> <li>• Know what standards and expectations are required of them</li> </ul>

For the pupil, assessment is directly linked to emotion and can “lead to elation or dejection, fear or excitement but is rarely neutral.”<sup>28</sup> Therefore assessment has to be carefully managed. As noted above, attainment targets are linked to levels of performance expected from the pupil depending on their age and, to some extent, their ability. However the standardization of attainment means that some comparisons will inevitably occur. Pupils who achieve as expected / higher than expected receive independent confirmation from the school and examiners that they have performed well. Their sense of self worth and pride may be increased, whereas pupils who achieve lower than expected may experience the opposite feeling. If pupils are to do well, therefore, they need to be motivated to do their best. Motivation can be

<sup>26</sup> CEA@Islington Quality Statement on assessment practice (secondary), July 2003, Issue 2, [http://www.qca.org.uk/libraryAssets/media/assessment\\_practice\\_secondary.pdf](http://www.qca.org.uk/libraryAssets/media/assessment_practice_secondary.pdf) [accessed 19 09 2007]

<sup>27</sup> Adapted from CEA@Islington Quality Statement on assessment practice (secondary), July 2003, Issue 2, [http://www.qca.org.uk/libraryAssets/media/assessment\\_practice\\_secondary.pdf](http://www.qca.org.uk/libraryAssets/media/assessment_practice_secondary.pdf) [accessed 19 09 2007]

<sup>28</sup> Weeden, Winter and Broadfoot, 2002, p15

both intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation relates to the kind of motivation in which students are keen to learn for their own self development, the goal of 'assessment for learning.' Ideally, the nature of the assessment task provides pupils with opportunities for structured learning and personal discovery. On the other hand, 'assessment of learning' is more likely to promote extrinsic motivation. Extrinsically motivated pupils will want to get good grades, teacher, parent and peer approval and admiration, and value the opportunity to obtain qualifications for their careers.<sup>29</sup> Often the two types of motivation are combined and it is evident from the two approaches to assessment outlined here, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are valued equally in the school context.

There is some debate about the impact of formal assessment on pupils, particularly the perceived burden of national testing and school league tables. Children and young people in the UK are amongst the most tested in the world, yet Britain is 'near the bottom of international league tables for the number of students leaving school with valuable qualifications.'<sup>30</sup> The target of five A\*-C grades at GCSE and emphasis on league tables, it is argued, has become too dominant in schools and school management 'at the expense of other desirable objectives.'<sup>31</sup> It has also been accused of leading to increased anxiety in pupils. This is particularly damaging for below-average children who can become defined (negatively) by their SATs scores.<sup>32</sup> Pupils who underachieve can become demotivated and demoralised, marginalised in an education system which values academic success:

'...a large minority of troubled, disadvantaged and "less academic" children and young people do not gain appropriate benefit from their education. They feel unhappy and unvalued by their teachers, experience bullying and harassment by fellow pupils (and sometimes reciprocate this), become trapped in a cycle of low attainment and poor self-esteem, are excluded formally from school or self-exclude...'<sup>33</sup>

Once pupils begin to feel that they are not successful at school because of low formal attainment they can lose confidence in other areas of their life:

'Pupils' self esteem and its impact on learning at 11 were more important predictors of success in future life than intellectual ability. Pupils who are confident and experience a sense of achievement, it seems, are more likely to profit from schooling and to be successful in life more generally.'<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Newstead, Stephen E. and Hoskins, Sherrida, 'Encouraging student motivation' in Heather Fry, Steve Ketteridge, Stephanie Marshall (eds) *A Handbook for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, London, Kogan Page Ltd, 1999, pp62-74

<sup>30</sup> Alexander Frea and Philip Webster, 'School league tables and tests are here to stay, says minister' in *The Times*, July 19 2007

<sup>31</sup> Cassen and Kingdon, 2007, p33

<sup>32</sup> Russell, 2002

<sup>33</sup> Bradshaw, Kemp, Baldwin and Rowe 2004, p38

<sup>34</sup> Weeden, P., Winter, J. and Broadfoot, P., *Assessment: What's in it for Schools?* RoutledgeFalmer, London, 2002, p15

For pupils who do not achieve as much as their peers, assessment continues to confirm what they already know. Their self esteem and feelings of self worth may continue to fall. In this context the emphasis on meeting targets is felt to have only intensified the pressure on pupils and teachers:

‘Children are being put under huge stress. Their sense of worth and purpose is being damaged, and real education is being neglected in favour of a pointless drilling in the passing of tests.’<sup>35</sup>

National testing can therefore be seen as a contributing factor to pupil demotivation and lack of attainment, it is ‘failing to improve standards, leaving pupils demotivated and stressed and encouraging bored teenagers to drop out of school.’<sup>36</sup>

Despite a growing number of critics of national testing and school league tables, the government has indicated that it will continue with testing and the publication of results as it is ‘the only way to ensure accountability.’<sup>37</sup> Changes to the new secondary curriculum however recognise that pupils need to be motivated and engaged learners. It requires teachers to ensure that assessment supports teaching and learning, and that they provide more opportunities for focused support and challenge where needed.<sup>38</sup> There is an increased emphasis on personalised learning, making connections across the curriculum and introducing dynamic, innovative teaching and learning methods:

‘The new curriculum builds on the best of the past by maintaining the discipline of subjects, but at the same time offering greater opportunities for personalised learning, addressing the major challenges that face society and equipping young people with the skills for life and work in the 21st Century.’<sup>39</sup>

### **3.3.3 Raising the achievement of the bottom 10-20% of pupils**

The government has consistently emphasised the need for schools to support attainment and to find ways to ensure that all pupils capable of so doing achieve formal qualifications. It has recognised that there remains a persistent core of underachieving pupils and has adopted many strategies to deal with this problem with mixed success. In 2006 *The Five Year Strategy for Children and Learners: Maintaining the Excellent Progress* established the following five priorities:

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<sup>35</sup> Jenni Russell, ‘I’m useless. I’m a three,’ in *The Guardian*, Thursday June 6, 2002

<sup>36</sup> Anushka Asthana, ‘Call to ban all school exams for under-16s,’ in *The Observer*, Sunday June 10, 2007

<sup>37</sup> Frean and Webster, 2007

<sup>38</sup> QCA, *The new secondary curriculum: what has changed and why?*

[http://www.qca.org.uk/libraryAssets/media/qca-07-3172-new\\_sec\\_curric\\_changes.pdf](http://www.qca.org.uk/libraryAssets/media/qca-07-3172-new_sec_curric_changes.pdf) [accessed 29 08 2007]

<sup>39</sup> QCA press release 12 July 2007, [http://www.qca.org.uk/qca\\_12195.aspx](http://www.qca.org.uk/qca_12195.aspx) [accessed 29 08 2007]

- To close the gap in educational attainment between those from low income and disadvantaged backgrounds and their peers
- To raise standards for all across the education system
- To increase the proportion of young people staying on in education or training beyond the age of 16
- To reduce the number of young people on a path to failure in adult life
- To close the skills gap at all levels – from basic literacy and numeracy to postgraduate research – to keep pace with the challenge of globalisation.<sup>40</sup>

The government has also urged head teachers of secondary schools to 'focus on raising the achievement of the bottom 10-20% of children, particularly amongst boys and some ethnic minority groups.'<sup>41</sup> Yet despite capital investment in education and skills in England rising from approximately £1.2 billion a year in 1997/1998 to £8.3 billion by 2007/2008, a seven fold increase,<sup>42</sup> the National Literacy Trust has highlighted the fact that:

'Four in ten pupils failed to master the expected levels in basic subjects this year. Ministers defended the scores saying that test results had improved with almost 100,000 more children hitting targets in the 3R's since 1997. The Bow Group told the *Telegraph* that pupils were reaching expected levels in English with far fewer marks. However, the QCA said that the boundaries reflected how hard a test was in a given year.'<sup>43</sup>

In a report by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation on low educational achievement, recent government initiatives were reviewed in an attempt to find out why tens of thousands of young people leave school with no or very few qualifications. The report concluded that 'There is much to be done in schools to reduce low achievement to considerably lower levels.'<sup>44</sup>

### 3.3.4 The relationship between attainment and social exclusion

The importance placed on education in twenty-first century society means that formal qualifications provide young people with more than academic success, namely access to a range of opportunities. Without formal qualifications young people are increasingly placed at a disadvantage and

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<sup>40</sup> *The Five Year Strategy for Children and Learners: Maintaining the Excellent Progress*, September 2006, p2,

<http://publications.everychildmatters.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/5yearstrategy-maintexcell.pdf> [accessed 14 09 2007]

<sup>41</sup> Letter from Education Secretary Ed Balls to all head teachers, 3 09 2007, National Literacy Trust website, [www.literacytrust.org.uk/literacynews/government.html](http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/literacynews/government.html) [accessed 14 09 07]

<sup>42</sup> *The Five Year Strategy for Children and Learners: Maintaining the Excellent Progress*, September 2007, p5

<http://publications.everychildmatters.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/5yearstrategy-maintexcell.pdf> [accessed 14 09 2007]

<sup>43</sup> *Literacy News*, <http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/literacynews/secondary.html#KS3> [accessed 14 09 2007]

<sup>44</sup> Robert Cassen and Geeta Kingdon, *Tackling Low Educational Achievement*, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, York, 2007, p38

may struggle to fulfil their potential. Presently in the UK the minimum attainment in learning 'for fulfilling participation in a flexible, modern economy like the UK is level 2, which is equivalent to 5 GCSEs grade A\* - C or an NVQ2'<sup>45</sup> however, there are suggestions that many pupils are failing to achieve this target although the proportion of pupils achieving GCSE grades A\* to C rose slightly in August 2007.<sup>46</sup>

Attainment, as measured through targets and educational qualifications and the mastery of key skills, can be seen as an important factor in facilitating and promoting social inclusion, and combating the negative impacts of social exclusion. 'Social exclusion', as a concept adopted by the present government, takes disadvantage to be more than material poverty. It is about 'prospects and networks and life chances. It's a very modern problem, and one that is more harmful to the individual, more damaging to self-esteem, more corrosive to society as a whole, more likely to be passed down from generation to generation than material poverty.'<sup>47</sup> Social exclusion is therefore perceived as a series of linked and interdependent dimensions which impact on the lives of those who are excluded and can prevent them from breaking out of a cycle of disadvantage.

'For example, low educational attainment may lead to low income in later life, or poor housing may lead to poor health. This can lead to exclusion from one or more of the other dimensions. For example, unemployment or low pay may, in time, lead to political, social or cultural exclusion.'<sup>48</sup>

Low educational attainment has also been linked to poorer reported general health, depression and disengagement with civic and community life.<sup>49</sup> Ensuring that pupils are given fair methods of assessment and are involved in their learning so that they understand their progression, therefore, becomes far more crucial than mere academic success because of the impact it can have an impact on their life outside school.

### 3.3.5 Conclusions

In conclusion, in the current educational climate formal assessment is embedded and is here to stay. Whilst there are loud and insistent criticisms of

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<sup>45</sup> DfES, *Supporting Young People to Achieve: Towards a new deal for Skills*, March 2004, p8

<sup>46</sup> See <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/6958992.stm> for the rise in GCSE results and Alexandra Frean, 'GCSE pupils failing to make the grade in key subjects, say Tories', *The Times*, 22 August 2007,

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/education/article2302865.ece> [accessed 19 09 2007] for the Tory party's claims that this rise is misleading

<sup>47</sup> Tony Blair speaking at the launch of the Social Exclusion unit in 1997, quoted in Michael Harloe, 'Social Justice and the city: the new 'liberal formulation,' *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, vol 25.4, December 2001, p891

<sup>48</sup> Scottish Museum Council, *Museums and Social Justice: how museums and galleries can work for their whole communities*, Edinburgh, December 2000

<sup>49</sup> Bradshaw, J, Kemp P, Baldwin, S. and Rowe A., *The Drivers of Social Exclusion: A review of the literature for the Social Exclusion Unit in the Breaking the Cycle Series*, Social Exclusion Unit, Sept 2004, p35

the detrimental impact on young people and schools, the links between attainment and future life choices are also well documented. Education is seen as the means for social mobility, as a way out of poverty and deprivation. Reforms in the secondary curriculum suggest a move towards types of learning that can also be seen as characteristic of museum learning; emphasising a creative, learner-centred approach where the needs and capabilities of the learners are taken into consideration, a coherent learning experience with opportunities for pupils to “develop their creativity and adaptability and see how their studies relate to the world beyond the classroom.”<sup>50</sup> Moreover museums have been able to engage less able pupils which suggest they may have a role to play in raising the achievement of the bottom 10-20% of children. Museums are therefore well placed to demonstrate the ways in which they can fit into this changing policy context and demonstrate how the positive impact they have on assessment is only one element of a broader picture of how museums encourage and support learning.

### 3.4 Conclusion

This study takes attainment to be a wide concept that embraces learning, motivation and social exclusion; that educational achievement is an important route out of poverty and deprivation and vital for future well-being and participation in society. Whilst recognising that there are potentially damaging consequences from an over-emphasis on assessment, where assessment is used as a tool for learning, where pupils are motivated and learner-centred approaches take into account the needs of all pupils regardless of their ability or background, it can be beneficial for supporting learning and enabling pupils (and the school and the wider community) to understand their progress through education.

It is recognised that museums provide environments which provide multiple opportunities for learner-centred activities that can lead to (or support) assessed pieces of work. A review of the evidence from previous research studies suggests that pupils of all abilities have the potential to benefit from activities such as those provided by museums and galleries in that they:

- Become engaged with the topic and task emotionally and physically as well as intellectually
- Enjoy the active process of learning outside the classroom
- Develop new skills and interests
- Become more motivated and enthusiastic about the subject
- Are encouraged by the museum to use existing knowledge to develop new meanings and deeper understandings
- Gain confidence in their ability to undertake an assessed piece of work.

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<sup>50</sup> QCA, *Reviewing the secondary national curriculum*, January 2007  
[http://www.qca.org.uk/libraryAssets/media/qca-07-3037\\_sec\\_curric\\_review\\_web.pdf](http://www.qca.org.uk/libraryAssets/media/qca-07-3037_sec_curric_review_web.pdf)  
[accessed 29 08 2007]

## SECTION 4: RESEARCH METHODS

<b>4.0</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	73
<b>4.1</b>	<b>The approach to the evaluation</b>	73
4.1.1	Ensuring a breadth of evidence	73
4.1.2	The museums participating in the research study	75
4.1.3	The proportion of secondary pupils participating in the study	76
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Methods of data collection</b>	77
4.2.1	Questionnaires for teachers and pupils visiting museums	78
	• Estimate, distribution and return of questionnaires	78
4.2.2	Assessment marks	78
	• Analysing the assessment marks	79
4.2.3	Four detailed case studies	81
4.2.4	Desk research	82
<b>4.3</b>	<b>Challenges of the research process</b>	83
4.3.1	Challenges - collecting the quantitative data	83
4.3.2	Challenges – selection of the case studies	84
<b>4.4</b>	<b>The schools visiting museums as part of this study</b>	85
4.4.1	Downham Market High School – Technology College	86
4.4.2	The Manor Community College	86
4.4.3	Hampton College	87
4.4.4	Fakenham High School and College	87
4.4.5	Holbrook High School	88
4.4.6	Stradbroke Business and Enterprise College	88
4.4.7	City of Norwich School	89
4.4.8	Rosemary Musker High School	90
4.4.9	Neatherd High School	90
<b>4.5</b>	<b>Research Ethics</b>	91
<b>4.6</b>	<b>Four previous RCMG evaluations and their relationship to the present evaluation</b>	92

## SECTION 4: RESEARCH METHODS

### 4.0 Introduction

This research has been carried out by the Research Centre for Museums and Galleries (RCMG) in collaboration with Colly Mudie, Learning Manager at Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse who facilitated the collection of data from the museums and schools who participated in the study. It uses mixed methods, both quantitative and qualitative, in order to gain both a broad overview and an in-depth understanding through case studies of the potential impact of a museum visit on the attainment of secondary age pupils through an assessed piece of work following the visit. Quantitative and qualitative research methods offer a different kind of evidence and here they are used to compliment each other, a combination which is increasingly familiar in social science research.

The RCMG researchers involved in the project have long experience of, and backgrounds in, museums and museum education, and the research design has been informed by four large-scale national studies on the impact of museum education programmes carried out by RCMG for the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) and for the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) between 2003 and 2007.

In the regional context, museum education and learning staff played an active role in organising and facilitating the observation by RCMG researchers of the sessions held in their museums and provided additional material and observations that have informed this report. Teachers provided assessment marks and additional material along with insights into pupil progress and attainment.

This section gives an overview of the approach to the evaluation and the research methods used, some of the challenges encountered during the research and a description of the schools that were involved in the project and the museums and galleries that they visited.

### 4.1 The approach to the evaluation

This research study investigates further the premise that museums can have an impact on the attainment of secondary-age pupils completing an assessed piece of work as a result of a museum visit. The research took place across a range of museums and one archive in the East of England, working with a variety of secondary schools, and across diverse subjects.

#### 4.1.1 Ensuring a breadth of evidence

This research study was built on the evidence of the Gressenhall case study in *What did you learn at the museum today? Second study: Evaluation of the outcomes and impact of learning through the implementation of the*

*Education Programme Delivery Plan across nine Regional Hubs.* Whilst this evidence is robust in terms of methodology, it was numerically a tiny sample. To enable a broader picture of the potential impact of museum visits on the attainment of secondary pupils for this research study it was important to get evidence on a much larger scale.

The aim of this study therefore was to work with a number of diverse museums and galleries from across the East of England region. Museums were chosen on the basis that they would cover a number of curriculum subjects, such as history, art, science and geography, and provide a variety of contexts. A condition of the research study was that museums and galleries would be working with secondary schools whose participation in curriculum-focused sessions in the museum would lead to an assessed piece of course work. Schools who did not undertake an assessed piece of course work were not able to participate in this study. Furthermore, with their inclusion in the project museums were committed to being proactive research participants, supporting the collection of data from schools.

It was intended that the following six museums would take part in the study:

**Table 4.1.1a: Museums and galleries in the East of England originally selected for the research study**

Museum	Location	Curriculum subject
Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse	Norfolk	History Geography
Imperial War Museum, Duxford	Cambridgeshire	Science
The Fitzwilliam Museum	Cambridgeshire	English
Peterborough Museum	Cambridgeshire	History
Verulamium, St Albans	Hertfordshire	History
Sainsbury Centre for the Visual Arts	Norfolk	Art

In practice, matching appropriate museum visits with secondary schools willing to take part in the research in the limited time frame available proved more difficult than anticipated. A flexible approach was therefore necessary to enable several changes of selected museums to be incorporated into the study, and to overcome further unexpected challenges. Taking account of these changes, the following five museums and galleries, and one archive, participated in the research:

**Table 4.1.1b: Participating museums and galleries in the East of England research study**

Museum	Location	Curriculum subject
Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse	Norfolk	History Geography
The Fitzwilliam Museum	Cambridgeshire	English
Peterborough Museum	Cambridgeshire	History
Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts	Norfolk	Art
Suffolk Archives	Suffolk	History
Moyses Hall Museum	Suffolk	History

#### 4.1.2 The museums participating in the research study

Museums eventually selected for the case study came from across the East of England region, although concentrated in the counties of Norfolk, Cambridgeshire and Suffolk (Fig. 4.1.2a). Each museum is described below.

**Fig. 4.1.2a: Map showing the location of the museums/galleries/archives participating in the research**



**Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse**, part of Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service, is a museum of Norfolk life housed in a large former workhouse. It tells the story of the nineteenth century workhouse alongside a museum looking at life on the land. There is also a working, traditional farm with rare breed animals and extensive grounds.<sup>1</sup>

The **Fitzwilliam Museum**, located near the centre of Cambridge, houses 'world-class' extensive collections of art and antiquities, founded on the behest of Viscount Fitzwilliam who donated his works of art and library to the University of Cambridge in 1816. Collections encompass works of art from the

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.museums.norfolk.gov.uk/default.asp?Document=200.50> [accessed 23 08 2007]

fourteenth century to the present day, coins and medals, armour, pottery and glass, drawings and prints, illuminated manuscripts and antiquities from Egypt, the Ancient Near East, Greece, Rome and Cyprus.<sup>2</sup>

**Peterborough Museum and Art Gallery** is located in the city centre and has existed on the site since 1931, although the building dates back to the eighteenth century. The museum has been managed by Peterborough City Council since 1968 and features collections themed around archaeology, geology, social history, natural history and art, alongside local notables such as John Clare the 'peasant poet' and works produced by prisoners of war from the Norman Cross prison established during the Napoleonic wars.<sup>3</sup>

The **Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts** at the University of East Anglia was founded when Sir Robert and Lady Lisa Sainsbury donated their collection of world art to the University of East Anglia in 1973. The Centre has been opened to the public since 1978 and not only houses the Sainsbury's Collections of art, sculpture, and ceramics but also the University collection of abstract and constructivist art, architecture and design, and the Anderson Collection of Art Nouveau containing jewellery, furniture, glassware and metalwork.<sup>4</sup>

**Suffolk Archives** has three record offices based at Ipswich, Bury St Edmunds and Lowestoft which deal mainly with records relating to the history of Suffolk and its people, dating from the twelfth century to the present day.<sup>5</sup>

**Moyses Hall Museum** is located in the market place of Bury St Edmunds, the building dating back to the twelfth century. It tells the story of West Suffolk from prehistoric times to the present day, with an emphasis on social history and local history, including exhibits related to the notorious Red Barn Murder which caused a sensation in the nineteenth century.<sup>6</sup>

#### 4.1.3 The proportion of secondary pupils participating in the study

The qualitative findings and the data analysed for this report are drawn from a small number of pupil visits to selected museums in the East of England. Assessment marks for 762 pupils were obtained from eight of the nine schools selected for this study. We can compare this proportion with the total number of secondary school pupils visiting the Hub museums in eastern region; Table 4.1.3a shows that the research sampled 7.6% of total usage based on the 2006-7 figures. This relatively small sample is not unexpected as only schools where a piece of assessed work was being done as a result of the museum visit could participate in the study.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/index.html> [accessed 23 08 2007]

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.peterborough.gov.uk/page-488> [accessed 23 08 2007]

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.scva.org.uk/> [accessed 23 08 2007]

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/LeisureAndCulture/LocalHistoryandHeritage/SuffolkRecordOffice/> [accessed 23 08 2007]

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.stedmundsbury.gov.uk/sebc/visit/moyeses-hall.cfm> [accessed 23 08 2007]

**Table 4.1.3a: Numbers of primary and secondary pupils visiting Renaissance in the Region East of England Museums 2005-2007**

Museum Service	2005-6 Primary	2005-6 Secondary	2006-7 Primary	2006-7 Secondary
Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service (lead Hub)	20,271	5,363	21,522	5,192
Luton Museums	7,238	1,404	5,477	575
Colchester Museums	21,639	1,658	20,083	1,333
Fitzwilliam Museum	5,584	2,761	8,008	2,943
Total	57,732	<b>11,186</b>	55,090	<b>10,043</b>

## 4.2 Methods of data collection

The range of methods used in this research study is outlined below:

- Questionnaires for teachers and pupils visiting museums
- Assessment marks provided by each participating schools
- Four detailed case studies, which included interviews, observations and the collection of documents and other information
- Desk research.

The research methods had a close relationship with the research objectives:

**Table 4.2a: The relationship between the research objectives and the research methods**

Research objectives	Research method
To identify the learning outcomes of the pupils as a result of the museum visit and the perceived impact on their learning / assignment marks	<b>Form B Post-visit</b> questionnaires completed at the <b>end of the session in the museum by all pupils</b> involved in the evaluation
To identify the context of the schools involved	<i>Your School and The Museum Visit</i> Form completed by <b>all teachers at the end of the session in the museum</b>  This information was used for postcode analysis of all participating schools  Most recent Ofsted inspection reports consulted to provide general information about the participating schools
To measure the impact of the museum experience upon the pupils' attainment	<b>Marks</b> for each pupil for the <b>assignment</b> as a result of the visit  <b>3 previous assignment marks</b> ( or equivalent) for each pupil

#### **4.2.1 Questionnaires for teachers and pupils visiting museums**

To be able to give an overview of the pupils' learning experiences at the museum, quantitative data was gathered using questionnaires given to teachers and pupils to complete immediately at the end of a museum visit. The same format of questionnaire was used by all museums so that comparisons could be made across and between participating schools.

Questionnaires were developed from those used previously by RCMG in four large-scale, national research studies. This meant that they were tried and tested, and would also enable comparisons to be made between this research and a large body of previous research. In particular the post-visit evaluation forms filled in by the pupils, Form B KS3 and above, retained the method of asking pupils to fill in an open-ended questionnaire statement 'The most interesting thing about today was...' and this provided some interesting insights into pupil attitudes.

An abridged version of Form A – Teacher's Questionnaire from previous research studies was used to gather context about the school for later analysis. This included the school's address and postcode, the age of the pupils (Year), the type of school, number of pupils on the visit and the number of teachers and accompanying adults at the museum.

Copies of both questionnaires are provided in Appendix 2.

- **Estimate, distribution and return of questionnaires**

Distributed by RCMG, the packs were administered by MLA East of England, the East of England Hub and participating museums. It was the museum's responsibility to ensure that both pupils and teachers completed the required forms at the end of the visit and returned them to RCMG. The questionnaires were designed so that they were ready prepared in clearly labelled envelopes so that they could be easily handed out to groups to be completed at the end of a session.

In total 11 completed Form As and 451 completed Form Bs were returned by eight schools, a ninth school were unable to send the assessment marks or completed evaluation forms before the end of the Summer term.

On return to RCMG, the evaluation forms were entered into a spreadsheet and analysed using both SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) version 14.0 and EXCEL.

#### **4.2.2 Assessment marks**

It was a condition of participation in the research that schools would be undertaking a piece of work linked to the museum visit and that they would provide for comparison purposes up to three previous assignment marks. Of the nine schools that participated in the research study, eight schools were able to provide assessment marks that could be analysed for evidence of impact on the pupils following the museum visit. It was the responsibility of the

museums to collect the assessment marks from the school as soon as they were made available and forward these to RCMG.

- **Analysing the assessment marks**

After the assessment marks were received by RCMG they were entered into an EXCEL spreadsheet for analysis. In analysing the progression of pupils, we followed the teacher's judgement as most schools had already analysed the marks indicating whether the pupils had progressed in their museum-related assignment using the following three categories:

- Increased in their marks (showed progression)
- Stayed the same as previous marks
- Decreased in their marks (failed to progress)

In order for a general picture of pupil progression to be made, these categories were used to analyse assignment marks from all the schools involved in the study. This proved possible despite the variations in the marks provided by schools:

- For KS3 pupils, most schools gave marks that corresponded with National Curriculum levels from level 2 (below expectations) to level 7 (beyond expectations), often subdivided further into categories such as a, b, c or using + and -
- For KS4 and above pupils, grades were given from A\* to U, again often subdivided by the use of + or -

Where pupils' marks fluctuated an 'average' was taken from across the marks given, following the teacher's judgment where possible. An example below shows how the pupil's mark fluctuates between assignments and the teacher has made the judgement that based on the mark for the museum-based assignment (Gressenhall assignment) the pupil has gone up by one level.

Surname	M/F	Assessment 1 (Armada)	Assessment 2 (Cromwell)	Assessment 3 (French Revolution)	Gressenhall Assessment	Progression (based on analysis by teacher)
-	M	4/5 C	6/7 A	5/6 B/A	6/7 A	+1

Schools often provided baseline assessment marks which helped in this process. Where schools provided marks for pupils who did not take part in museum visits or projects for the same assignment, their marks were not included in the analysis of the overall findings.

In practice a relatively simple method was developed to capture the amount by which a pupil had progressed in their marks or grades. As most schools used sub-divisions in the awarding of levels, sometimes three, sometimes two, the category of 'less than 1' was necessary to capture the smaller changes in marks given. It was also possible to compare progression in marks across

gender where this information was supplied by the school. However concern with confidentiality prevented some schools from providing this information.

In terms of measuring the impact on pupils of different ability, this proved challenging as different age groups and different schools used different methods to record and measure attainment. A system was devised to categorise the pupils using the expected levels set by the National Curriculum as a guide.<sup>7</sup>

**Table 4.2.2a: Comparison of expected level for pupils at the end of Key stages 1, 2 and 3<sup>8</sup>**

Level	7 years	11 years	14 years
Level 8*			
Level 7			
Level 6			
Level 5			
Level 4			
Level 3			
Level 2a, 2b, 2c			
Level 1			

Key to shading	
Exceptional	
Beyond expectations	
At level expected	
Below expectations	

\* KS3 pupils can gain Level 8 in mathematics only. Level 7 is the highest available in the KS3 English and science tests.

Using these levels and the comments supplied by teachers regarding the levels and grades awarded, pupils' scores were categorised into:

- 'Lower' ability pupils (below expectations for their age)
- 'Average' ability (achieving the level expected for their age)
- 'Higher' ability (achieving beyond the expectations for their age)

This enabled a comparison to be made between those pupils of assumed 'lower', 'average' and 'higher' ability to see if the potential impact of the museum visit varied according to the ability of the pupil. For each of the year groups included in the research study, Table 4.2.2a details the levels used to determine the pupils whom fell into each ability-related category:

**Table 4.2.2a: Ability-related categories, levels used to identify pupils into three categories**

Year group	'Lower' ability	'Average' ability	'Higher' ability
Year 7	Level 3 and below	Level 4	Level 5 and above
Year 8	Level 3 and below	Level 4-5	Level 6 and above
Year 9	Level 4 and below	Level 5-6	Level 7 and above
GCSE and A-level	Grade D-U	Grade C	Grade A-B

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.dfes.gov.uk/performancetables/ks3\\_06/k5.shtml](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/performancetables/ks3_06/k5.shtml) [accessed 16 08 2007]

<sup>8</sup> Adapted from [http://www.dfes.gov.uk/performancetables/ks3\\_06/k5.shtml](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/performancetables/ks3_06/k5.shtml) [accessed 19 09 2007]

### 4.2.3 Four detailed case studies

Four case studies were carried out as part of this research. Case studies enable the exploration of events and situations, and an understanding of the issues and contexts that produced them, in this case the museum experiences that led to the attitudes of the participants and impact on attainment as recorded quantitatively in the questionnaires and assessment marks.

The research process for the case studies was conceived as three discrete stages:

**Table 4.2.3a: The three-stage process for the case studies**

Stage	Research methods
Context-gathering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speaking to teachers and museum staff to elicit the context for the visit, the objectives of the sessions and the expectations of the visit</li> <li>• This was done by phone in advance of the visit or on the day of the visit in some instances</li> <li>• Desk research</li> </ul>
Identifying the impact of the museum experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accompanied visit/ observation at the museum with the school</li> <li>• Interviews with museum staff</li> <li>• Interviews with facilitators, artists etc.</li> <li>• Post – visit questionnaires for teachers</li> <li>• Post – visit questionnaires for pupils</li> </ul>
Follow-up visit and measurement of the actual impact on assignment marks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A post-museum visit to the school to interview teachers and pupils about the impact of their visit</li> <li>• Marks up to 3 previous assignment marks</li> <li>• Marks for the assignment as a result of the visit</li> </ul>

In choosing the case studies, RCMG worked in collaboration with East of England Hub museums and MLA East of England. Museums were selected on basis of:

- Past track record, and established education programmes
- Range of curriculum areas covered
- Range of Key stages of pupils
- Range of governance of museums including Hub and non-Hub museums.

Regarding the choice of schools to participate in the case studies, Downham Market High School was revisited in order to build on the findings of the 2005-6 case study, whilst three more schools were selected on the basis of their capacity to explore the impact of museum visits on pupil attainment in

greater depth. The three schools were selected by the participating museums. Practical considerations, such as the timescale of the sessions, and other time and resource implications were taken into account which meant that the three-stage case study process had to be flexible.

The focus of one case study with higher ability pupils studying science was changed at short notice when, just before the case study was about to begin both the museum and the school withdrew from participation in the research. With an extremely short time-scale to find a fourth case study, a second Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse case study was organised with Fakenham High School, studying Geography.

Details for the four case studies carried out as part of this research study are outlined below:

**Table 4.2.3b: Details of the four case studies**

Date of visit (s)	Museum	Subject	School	Level	Researcher(s)
08/12/06	Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse	History	Downham Market High School	KS3	Jocelyn Dodd
30/04/07 12/06/07	Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse	Geography	Fakenham High School	KS3	Sheila Watson
20/02/07 01/03/07	Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts	Art	Rosemary Musker High School	KS4 (GCSE)	Sheila Watson Ceri Jones
02/03/07 09/03/07	The Fitzwilliam Museum	English	The Manor Community School	KS3	Sheila Watson

The first Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse case study was the follow-up to the original study in 2005 and was carried out with the original school, Downham Market High School, evaluating the same museum History session with the same researcher.<sup>9</sup>

Further telephone conversations were held with teachers and museum staff after the visits, and additional interviews with advisors in the region, to give additional context for the report. These included:

- Dale Banham, Humanities advisor for Suffolk
- Andrew Bundy, English advisor for Norfolk.

#### 4.2.4 Desk research

For the purposes of understanding and defining the concepts used in the research study, some exploration of the literature was carried out around

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<sup>9</sup> The case study for this study therefore entailed a visit to the school alone as the session had been observed the previous year and it was felt to be largely the same experience for the pupils

attainment and its relationship with social exclusion; recent educational initiatives and their relationship to the research, and a small amount of desk research was carried out to establish the context for the participating schools.

### 4.3 Challenges of the research process

Through the process of this research study a number of (sometimes unexpected) challenges were encountered which had an impact on both the selection of the museums and case studies but also the collection of the quantitative data. These are presented in summary below.

#### 4.3.1 Challenges - collecting the quantitative data

The small scale of this study necessitated museums playing a key role in collecting data from schools. This meant that the context in which the assessed work took place was not available to researchers. This research involved museum staff developing good relationships with teachers and ensuring that questionnaires and assessment marks were collected for all participating schools. With museums acting as gatekeepers to the participants, the organisation of the case studies and the subsequent collection of data depended a great deal on the responsiveness of museum partners. This also limited the amount of knowledge that RCMG had about the context of the data collection.

The aim was to collect evidence from around 900 pupils in the East of England region. However, in practice this number appeared to be optimistic as it proved more difficult than anticipated for museums to collect data from schools. For some schools it was felt inappropriate to ask them to complete the questionnaires or only classes that were involved in the case studies were required to fill them in. However, in total 451 pupils completed a Form B – Pupils' Questionnaire, 50% of the intended amount which is a realistic response rate.<sup>10</sup>

Originally it was hoped that three previous assignment marks would be obtained for all pupils. However, in some cases this was not possible. For example, in one school some pupils had not completed one of the previous pieces of assessed work because of staff absence in a previous term. In addition it was inevitable that there were some omissions as a result of pupils being ill, not completing course work or absent on the day of the visit. Despite these difficulties, useable assessment marks were provided for 762 pupils, 85% of the initial target of 900 pupils.

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<sup>10</sup> Response rates for previous RCMG research studies range from 78% and 67% for the two *What did you learn at the museum today?* studies to 87% and 42% for the two DCMS/DCSF *Inspiration, Identity, Learning: The value of museums* studies; very high response rates for early projects were obtained through a closely monitored system developed between RCMG and the participating museums

### 4.3.2 Challenges – selection of the case studies

In the selection of the case studies, ideally there would have been a fourth museum. The Imperial War Museum, Duxford was chosen because of its status as a national museum and with sessions covering science it had a very different focus from other museums. However IWM Duxford pulled out of the project at short notice. In an email of 20 April 2007, the Science and Technology teacher at Duxford, whilst stressing that both the museum and the school saw the former as important places of learning, outlined his reasons for no longer wishing to be part of the research study:

‘I might have misunderstood the research and in doing so inadvertently misled you. However I seem to remember that I initially made it clear that the session in which [the school] participates is not part of any sustained or ongoing programme here at the museum and that it was only marginally. I would never claim that a one off visit could enable students to raise their attainment by two levels as in your Gressenhall case study. Indeed the students from [the school] are already high flyers whilst I understand that those in your case study were low achievers and were immersed in a full day of role play etc.

I tend to agree with [the teacher] from the school that it would be difficult if not impossible to quantify an improvement in student attainment based on only one visit to the museum especially when the session they are involved in is a reinforcement of the work they have done and simply serves to put it in to context. What could be noted would be greater engagement with the subject. I am providing a context and a real world experience rather than a subject teaching session at this level. At KS2 Y5/6 I am providing first time teaching and staff INSET and judging by the feedback attainment has been measurably improved.

I am also uneasy with the idea of comparing previous attainment in a tenuously related subject to that of the session.

So in short [the teacher] and [the school] still have considerable reservations and I do not feel able to push the case given my reservations.’<sup>11</sup>

The use of Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse a second time was opportunistic to replace this session. A suitable and willing school, undertaking a piece of assessed work for geography at this site, was prepared to participate during the brief window of time available to the researchers. However the absence of a science-themed case study does mean that there is an emphasis on arts and humanities themes to the case studies which was unavoidable.

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<sup>11</sup> Email to Colly Mudie, sent 20 April 2006. The name of the school and the teacher have been removed

#### 4.4 The schools visiting museums as part of this study

In total, nine comprehensive schools were involved in the research study from across the region. It is a diverse sample of schools in terms of size, type and urban or rural location. Reflecting the location of the participating museums and archives, schools are concentrated in the counties of Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire.

Fig. 4.4a: Map of the East of England showing the location of the nine schools involved in the study



Below is presented a brief description of each of the schools involved in the research study. Information for each school is taken from a variety of sources including Form A, the case study visits and publicly available material such as Ofsted inspection reports. For the purposes of an earlier research study (DCMS2:2007) we were granted access to a database compiled by DCFS which gives information for all schools in England including the full school address. Using this database it was possible to identify some additional information about the schools involved in this research study, including those schools which had not completed a Form A.

#### **4.4.1 Downham Market High School – Technology College**

Downham Market High School is a foundation comprehensive school located in the small market town of Downham Market in Norfolk. It is designated a Specialist Technology College. It is a large school with c. 1561 pupils aged 11-18 on roll, and serves a wide rural area. Pupils are predominantly white, reflecting the local area where about four per cent of the population are born outside the UK and one per cent of people are of minority ethnic heritage.<sup>12</sup> According to the Ofsted inspection report from 2004 the “profile of students is about average, both socio-economically and in terms of attainment.”<sup>13</sup>

The entire Year 9 from Downham Market High School visited Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse over three days in November 2006, for a History-related session to complete an assignment, ‘Was the workhouse so bad?’ Around 90 pupils visited each day making an estimated total of 270 pupils visiting across the three days, accompanied by both class and trainee teachers. In total, 257 pupils completed a Form B which is very close to this estimate.

#### **4.4.2 The Manor Community College**

The Manor Community College is a small mixed comprehensive school in north Cambridge, with 358 students on roll (2006/2007). Pupils are predominantly white British with very small numbers of pupils from other ethnic groups and consequently pupils with English as a second language are below the national average. The school has above average numbers of pupils eligible for free school meals and average numbers of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. In 2004 the school was judged to be failing but since then special measures have been lifted and whilst standards “are below average most students make good progress from a very low base and achieve well.”<sup>14</sup>

Pupils from Year 8 visited the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge for a session themed around English and creative writing. For English, Year 8 is divided into three groups based on ability; a top ability group of twenty-eight pupils and two mid to low ability groups of fifteen pupils each.<sup>15</sup> These three classes visited the Fitzwilliam Museum separately on three days in February and March, fifty-eight pupils in total. Only one group completed Form A and Form B, the same class who are the subject of the case study. The group consisted

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<sup>12</sup> Downham Market High School Inspection report, January 2004, [http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/reports/pdf/?inspectionNumber=259294&providerCategoryID=8192&fileName=%5C%5Cschool%5C%5C121%5C%5Cs10\\_121210\\_20040401.pdf](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/reports/pdf/?inspectionNumber=259294&providerCategoryID=8192&fileName=%5C%5Cschool%5C%5C121%5C%5Cs10_121210_20040401.pdf) [accessed 14 08 2007]. Additional information about the ethnicity of the local population supplied by MLA East of England

<sup>13</sup> As above, p3

<sup>14</sup> The Manor Community College inspection report, March 2006, p2, additional information from p1, [http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/reports/pdf/?inspectionNumber=284336&providerCategoryID=8192&fileName=\\school\\110\\s8ds5\\_110872\\_20060503.pdf](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/reports/pdf/?inspectionNumber=284336&providerCategoryID=8192&fileName=\\school\\110\\s8ds5_110872_20060503.pdf) [accessed 14 08 2007]

<sup>15</sup> Information taken from the planning notes provided by the Fitzwilliam Museum

of ten pupils (all who completed a questionnaire) who were accompanied by their class teacher and two teaching assistants.

#### 4.4.3 Hampton College

Hampton College in Peterborough opened in September 2005 and is a very popular school, already over-subscribed. In 2006/2007 there were 184 pupils on roll which makes it the smallest school participating in the research. There are fewer students than average with learning difficulties or disabilities, and percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals is low. Numbers of pupils from minority ethnic groups are broadly the same as the national average. Attainment on entry is generally average and pupils thrive within the school as reported by the Ofsted inspection team;

“The students' achievement is outstanding. The school does not yet have national tests results with which to compare standards and achievement. However, recent mock test results and teacher assessments show that the current Year 9 students are on track to achieve well above average levels in English, mathematics and science.”<sup>16</sup>

Pupils from Year 7 were involved in a History project with Peterborough Museum whereby they worked in the classroom with objects from the museum's loan boxes and afterwards visited the museum to practice the skills they learnt in the classroom. Pupils completed an assignment called 'The Stone Age Murder Mystery.' They visited the museum over two days in February 2007. One group completed the evaluation forms on 6 February, a group of six Year 7 pupils who visited with their teacher and a teaching assistant. These pupils all completed a Form B after their visit.

#### 4.4.4 Fakenham High School and College

Fakenham High School is a large, mixed comprehensive school for students aged 11-19 spread across two sites, one of which is known as the College. It has specialist technology college status and is located in the market town of Fakenham in north Norfolk. In 2006/2007 there were 1452 pupils on roll which, after Downham Market, makes it the second largest participating school. Like other schools in the East of England the pupils are largely white British with much smaller numbers of pupils from other ethnic backgrounds. Percentages of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are broadly average and numbers of pupils eligible for free school meals are below the national average. In 2004 at the time of inspection the achievement of pupils was deemed to be good.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Hampton College Inspection report, February – March 2007, p3, [http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/reports/pdf/?inspectionNumber=294247&providerCategoryID=8192&fileName=%5C%5Cschool%5C%5C135%5C%5Cs5\\_135002\\_20070322.pdf](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/reports/pdf/?inspectionNumber=294247&providerCategoryID=8192&fileName=%5C%5Cschool%5C%5C135%5C%5Cs5_135002_20070322.pdf) [accessed 14 08 2007] Additional information from the DCFS database

<sup>17</sup> Inspection report for Fakenham High School and College, February 2004, [http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/reports/pdf/?inspectionNumber=259293&providerCategoryID=8192&fileName=\\school\\121\\s10\\_121185\\_20040520.pdf](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/reports/pdf/?inspectionNumber=259293&providerCategoryID=8192&fileName=\\school\\121\\s10_121185_20040520.pdf) [accessed 14 08 2007]. Additional information from the DCFS database

Pupils from Year 7 visited Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse for a session themed around Geography, 'Houses, habitats and homelessness.' The entire year group visited over three days in April and May 2007, with around 65 pupils on each day. According to the completed Form A around five teachers accompanied the groups on each day. In total 165 pupils completed a Form B.

#### **4.4.5 Holbrook High School**

Holbrook is a mixed comprehensive school in rural Suffolk which had 491 pupils on roll in 2006/2007, making it smaller than the average secondary school. Almost all the pupils are white British in terms of their background; numbers of pupils from other ethnic heritages are negligible. Very few pupils are eligible for free school meals and the school population is relatively stable. In terms of attainment, the 2005 Ofsted inspection report comments that the:

"...majority of students come to the school with levels of attainment in English and mathematics which are comparable with national averages. Building on this, they continue to make good progress over their five years at Holbrook. Students with learning difficulties and disabilities also make good progress."<sup>18</sup>

Year 8 pupils from two mixed ability classes in History completed the assignment 'How important was Thomas Clarkson's role in the abolition of the slave trade?' Seven pupils from across the two classes were involved in an extension project with MLA East of England and Suffolk Archives to help them complete the assignment, which gave them the opportunity to visit the local record office and explore key sites and documents in greater detail. In the information provided there was no indication of how these seven pupils were chosen. Although the pupils did not complete evaluation forms, assessment marks for both classes were provided.

#### **4.4.6 Stradbroke Business and Enterprise College**

Like several of the schools in this study, Stradbroke Business and Enterprise College is a relatively small comprehensive school with 349 pupils on roll in 2006/2007. It is a mixed school for pupils aged 11-16, serving a wide area of rural Suffolk. The pupils are mainly from a white British background and the school has a designated unit for moderate learning difficulties. Standards of teaching and learning in 2005 were broadly average and higher in some subjects, whilst pupils' achievement was deemed to be good overall and well above average when compared to similar schools. At the time of the inspection the school had recently been awarded specialist school status in business and enterprise.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Holbrook High School Inspection Report, January 2006, p2, [http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/reports/pdf/?inspectionNumber=281823&providerCategoryID=8192&fileName=\\school\\124\\s5\\_124848\\_20060202.pdf](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/reports/pdf/?inspectionNumber=281823&providerCategoryID=8192&fileName=\\school\\124\\s5_124848_20060202.pdf) [accessed 14 08 2007] with additional information from the DCFS database

<sup>19</sup> Stradbroke High School Inspection report, April 2005, [http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/reports/pdf/?inspectionNumber=272074&providerCategoryID=8192&fileName=\\school\\124\\s5\\_124848\\_20060202.pdf](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/reports/pdf/?inspectionNumber=272074&providerCategoryID=8192&fileName=\\school\\124\\s5_124848_20060202.pdf)

KS4 pupils from Stradbroke visited Moyses Hall in Bury St Edmunds to produce an assignment on the theme of crime and punishment. The pupils did not complete evaluation forms, nor were any individual assessments marks sent by the school. According to the head of history the visit to the museum was a success and all but one pupil "said that the museum helped to reinforce what they had learnt." In terms of impact on their assessment, because of time constraints fifteen pupils could not visit the museum until after the assignment; the head of history comments that "had it been possible to have the full amount of time... I am certain that four of the groups would have achieved a higher level." The information provided by this school is therefore inconclusive as to whether the museum visit enabled pupils to achieve higher grades in their assessed work.<sup>20</sup>

#### 4.4.7 City of Norwich School

City of Norwich School is a large mixed comprehensive school of 1356 pupils (2006/2007) serving the southern areas of Norwich and outlying rural areas. Pupils are mainly white British; in 2004 around 5% of pupils came from an ethnic minority background. The 2004 Ofsted inspection reported that changes in the catchment area had resulted in more pupils from socially disadvantaged backgrounds attending the school, although generally pupils came from above average socio-economic backgrounds. As a result most students came to the school with above average standards in maths, English and science.<sup>21</sup> The quality of education at the school was deemed to be good:

"City of Norwich School is a good school with many strengths including very good leadership. Standards are above those nationally and the good teaching and learning enable students to achieve well. The school is successfully providing for an increasingly diverse intake that includes students with widely different needs."<sup>22</sup>

A-level students from City of Norwich School took part in a project at the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts at the University of East Anglia (UEA), Norwich, themed around art, philosophy and maths. Students were encouraged to develop their response to a piece of sculpture by Ian Tyson, "using some aspect of the process as defined by Ian in making the sculpture"<sup>23</sup> as part of their A-level Art course.

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[yID=8192&fileName=\\school\\124\\s10\\_124814\\_20050630.pdf](#) [accessed 14 08 2007] with additional information from the DCFS database

<sup>20</sup> The head of history is quoted from a letter sent to RCMG, dated 7 June 2007

<sup>21</sup> City of Norwich School Inspection report, October 2004, [http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/reports/pdf/?inspectionNumber=268780&providerCategoryID=8192&fileName=\\school\\121\\s10\\_121172\\_20041216.pdf](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/reports/pdf/?inspectionNumber=268780&providerCategoryID=8192&fileName=\\school\\121\\s10_121172_20041216.pdf) [accessed 14 08 2007] with additional information from the DCFS database

<sup>22</sup> As above, p8

<sup>23</sup> Information from notes supplied by Veronica Sekules of the Sainsbury Centre

#### 4.4.8 Rosemary Musker High School

With c. 804 pupils on roll, Rosemary Musker High School is a mixed comprehensive school for pupils aged 11-18 years, one of two comprehensives in the town of Thetford along with an independent grammar school. Although the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is close to the average, a number of pupils come from socially disadvantaged backgrounds, and the number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above average. Other pupils require support where they speak English as a second language.<sup>24</sup>

In April 2005 the school was deemed to require special measures; these were lifted in April 2006. The attainment on entry for pupils remains below average yet the school is working hard to overcome this and the underachievement of previous years:

"The majority of pupils now make the progress they should because of the improvements made to teaching and learning, and the pupils' much better behaviour and more positive attitudes."<sup>25</sup>

Two groups of GCSE Art students (one group of ten and one group of twelve students, each accompanied by their teacher) visited the Sainsbury Centre in February over two days. The visits were part of a broader project working with artists and objects; activities took place at the Sainsbury Centre and back at school. In terms of assessment the work linked in with the GCSE requirement to look at the work of artists, to analyse and evaluate it and adapt ideas for their own work.

#### 4.4.9 Neatherd High School

Serving a largely rural catchment area in Breckland, Norfolk<sup>26</sup>, Neatherd High School is described as a large, popular comprehensive school.<sup>27</sup> With 1344 pupils on roll in 2006/2007, it is a mixed school catering for pupils aged 11-18 years, located in the market town of Dereham. Although the number of students is increasing, the proportion of students from ethnic backgrounds other than white British remains low. Most students who enter the school are above average ability but there are also an above average number of pupils with learning difficulties. Achievement and standards are felt to be good and pupils "make good progress in Years 7 to 9 and reach standards which are well above average in the national tests at the end of Year 9."<sup>28</sup>

Pupils from Year 9 visited Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse for a Geography-related session, 'Houses, habitats and homelessness.' The entire year group participated, around nine classes visited over three days with their class

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<sup>24</sup> Rosemary Musker High School, Thetford, Inspection report, April 2006, [http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/reports/pdf/?inspectionNumber=283992&providerCategoryID=8192&fileName=\\school\\121\\s8ds5\\_121186\\_20060526.pdf](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/reports/pdf/?inspectionNumber=283992&providerCategoryID=8192&fileName=\\school\\121\\s8ds5_121186_20060526.pdf) [accessed 15 08 2007]

<sup>25</sup> As above, p2

<sup>26</sup> Breckland Council, <http://www.breckland.gov.uk/about-us> [accessed 15 08 2007]

<sup>27</sup> Neatherd High School Inspection report, September 2006, [http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/reports/pdf/?inspectionNumber=292045&providerCategoryID=8192&fileName=\\school\\121\\s5\\_121182\\_20061012.pdf](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/reports/pdf/?inspectionNumber=292045&providerCategoryID=8192&fileName=\\school\\121\\s5_121182_20061012.pdf) [accessed 15 08 2007]

<sup>28</sup> As above, p3

teachers and additional teaching assistants. As this was very early on in the timescale for the research the school were not asked to complete a Form B.

#### 4.5 Research Ethics

All research was carried out within the University of Leicester's Research Code of Conduct and Data Protection Code of Practice (both available from <http://www.le.ac.uk/academic/quality/Codes/index.html>). The following guidelines also provide a framework for RCMG research:

*Statement of ethical practice for the British Sociological Association*, <http://www.britsoc.co.uk>

*Ethical Guidelines*, Social Research Association, <http://www.the-sra.org.uk/>

*Revised Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research*, British Educational Research Association, <http://www.bera.ac.uk/>

*Legal and ethical issues in interviewing children*, [www.esds.ac.uk/aandp/create/guidelineschildren.asp](http://www.esds.ac.uk/aandp/create/guidelineschildren.asp)

*Guidelines for research among children and young people, Internet research guidelines, Qualitative research guidelines and The responsibilities of interviewers*, The Market Research Society 2000, <http://www.mrs.org.uk>

In gathering data for the research report, particularly the case studies, researchers came into contact with young people. All researchers were subject to standard disclosure from the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and, where possible, researchers worked in pairs. In interviews researchers were careful not to be alone with participants, ensuring that another researcher or adult, such as a teacher or museum staff, was present whenever possible. Care was taken to obtain the informed consent of participants to take part in the research, explaining to them in meaningful terms the purpose of the research, why they were involved, who was undertaking the research, and how it would be disseminated and used. An information sheet with this information was provided that participants could keep, along with contact details for the RCMG researchers. Following best practice, written consent forms were used with participants and these have been archived. It was also made clear to the participants that they could withdraw from the research at any time, even after their direct participation, if they were unhappy in any way.

The student voice is presented in the evaluation with quotations from interviews with the students. To protect their anonymity, the names of all young people have been changed in the research study.

An example of a consent form and information sheet used with participants is provided in Appendix 3.

#### 4.6 Four previous RCMG evaluations and their relationship to the present evaluation

Over the past four years, RCMG have carried out four large-scale national evaluation research programmes. *What did you learn at the museum today? Second Study* provided the tentative findings for the present research study and together they give a large body of evidence by which to give context for, and to make comparisons with, the present study. Following is a brief summary of each of the research studies and why they are of value to the present research study.

Commissioned by the Museums, Archives and Libraries Council (MLA) the first of the four studies was carried out between July 2003 and February 2004 and measured the outcomes and impact of learning in the three regional Phase 1 Hubs. The research report *What did you learn at the museum today?* presents both the findings and the research methods which formed the basis of subsequent research studies (This project is referred to as RR1:2003).

At the same time as the first study, RCMG was commissioned by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and the Department for Communities, Schools and Families (DCSF, formerly the Department for Education and Skills, DfES) to carry out an evaluation, using similar methods, of the first phase of the national/regional museums partnership, the Strategic Commissioning Museum Education programme. This national evaluation involved twelve theme-based partnerships between 12 national museums and 35 museums across England. *Inspiration, Identity, Learning: The value of museums* was completed in June 2004 (the study is referred to as DCMS/DCSF1:2004).

A second study of the impact and learning outcomes for school-aged children and young people resulting from Renaissance funding was carried out by RCMG from July 2005 and completed in February 2006. The research was extended to include the six Phase 2 Hubs, including the East of England, as well as the three Phase 1 Hubs. As far as possible, similar research methods were used to enable comparisons with the two previous studies. Separate reports were also produced for each of the regions. The full research report is entitled *What did you learn at the museum today? Second study* (and is referred to as RR2:2005).

The fourth and most recent study is a follow-up to DCMS/DCSF1:2004, where RCMG were commissioned by DCMS to evaluate twelve partnerships between national museums and their regional partners, some of which were continuing and some which were new since the previous study. There was a stronger emphasis on community-based work for this phase of the national/regional partnerships which necessitated some changes to the research methods; however it retained the same intellectual framework so that comparisons are possible between all four studies. Entitled *Inspiration, Identity, Learning: The value of museums, second study*, this study is abbreviated to DCMS/DCSF2:2007.

The connection between these studies is the research method based on the Generic Learning Outcomes (GLOs) to measure the outcomes and impact of learning in museums. Namely, the GLOs have been used to frame the questionnaires completed, over the four studies, by 64,063 pupils of primary and secondary age. The four studies can therefore be seen as a large body of linked data whereby the present study, through continuing this approach, can also be linked. Findings from the first study, RR1:2003, regarding the characteristics of museum learning have been confirmed and reinforced in subsequent studies, presenting as the most recent report proposes, "a consistent picture of the social impact and the learning outcomes of the educational work with schools of museums in England."<sup>29</sup>

The most interesting thing about today was...

that the gallery helped us more interested in our work. And the studio was excellent!!

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<sup>29</sup> Hooper-Greenhill et al, *Inspiration, Identity, Learning: The value of museums, second study, An evaluation of the DCMS/DfES national/regional museum partnership programme in 2006-2007*, June 2007, p100

## SECTION 5: QUANTITATIVE DATA

5.0	<b>Introduction</b>	95
5.1	<b>Form A: Teachers' questionnaire</b>	95
5.2	<b>Analysing the school postcodes</b>	96
5.2.1	The Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2004 (IMD) 2004	96
5.2.2	Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)	101
5.2.3	Conclusion – what does this mean for attainment?	103
5.3	<b>Form B – Pupils' questionnaire</b>	105
5.3.1	Who completed a Form B?	105
5.3.2	An overview of responses for Form B, KS3 and above	106
5.3.3	Reviewing the responses of pupils according to gender	107
5.3.4	Reviewing the responses of pupils according to age	109
5.3.5	Reviewing the responses for pupils - allowing for the "Gressenhall Effect"	111
5.3.6	Reviewing the responses of pupils in comparison with the four recent RCMG studies	112
5.3.7	Conclusion - linking positive learning experiences with attainment	115
5.4	<b>Assessment marks</b>	115
5.4.1	The overall picture – the impact of the museum visit on attainment	116
5.4.2	The impact of gender on attainment	119
5.4.3	The impact of ability on attainment	119
5.4.4	Conclusion – did the museum visit have an impact on attainment?	123
5.5	<b>The schools involved in the research study</b>	124
5.5.1	Downham Market High School (Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse)	126
5.5.2	Neatherd High School (Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse)	130
5.5.3	Holbrook High School (Suffolk Archives)	133
5.5.4	City of Norwich School (Sainsbury Centre for the Visual Arts, UEA)	135
5.5.5	The Manor Community College (Fitzwilliam Museum)	139
5.5.6	Fakenham High School (Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse)	142
5.5.7	Rosemary Musker High School (Sainsbury Centre for the Visual Arts)	147
5.5.8	Hampton College (Peterborough Museum)	150
5.8.9	Stradbroke Business and Enterprise College (Moyses Hall)	153
5.9	<b>Conclusion – the limits of quantitative data</b>	153

## SECTION 5: QUANTITATIVE DATA

### 5.0 Introduction

Quantitative data was collected in two main ways during the research; through questionnaires given to teachers and pupils immediately after their museum visit, and through the collection of assessment marks provided by the schools related to a piece of work completed in conjunction with the museum experience. This section of the report describes and analyses the quantitative data. It gives both an overall picture of the findings and the detail for each of the nine schools included within the research study.

It is important to note the over-representation of pupils visiting Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse in the quantitative data due to three out of the nine schools participating in the study visiting the museum and the practice of whole year groups taking part in these sessions.

### 5.1 Form A: Teachers' questionnaire

Eleven Form As were returned by five of the schools involved in the research: seven of these forms were returned by teachers from Downham Market High School visiting Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse. Form As were also returned by Neatherd High School, Fakenham High School, Hampton College, and Manor Community College.

Form A's function was to provide information about the context for the school and its visit to the museum. This included details about the museum, the school's address, including full postcode, the type of school and how many pupils and teachers went on the visit. The provision of the school's address postcode enabled access to additional sources of data, such as the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004 (IMD 2004). A copy of the questionnaire is included in Appendix 2.

All the schools completing a Form A indicated that they were a comprehensive school. Age of pupils ranged from Year 7 (Hampton College and Fakenham High School), to Year 8 (The Manor Community College) and Year 9 (Downham Market High School and Neatherd High School).

Where schools did not return a Form A - Rosemary Musker School, Holbrook High School, City of Norwich School and Stradbroke High School - information about the school was obtained using a separate database provided by Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF, formerly DfES) which had been provided for a prior research study.<sup>1</sup> This database includes the name and address of all primary and secondary schools and colleges in

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<sup>1</sup> Hooper-Greenhill et al, *Inspiration, Identity, Learning: The Value of Museums, Second Study*, DCMS, June 2007

England and various statistics - including number of pupils on roll, number and percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals and full school address - so it could be utilised for all the schools in the research study.

## 5.2 Analysing the school postcodes

It has been demonstrated that there is a link between low educational achievement and the increased likelihood of social deprivation through decreased access to a range of opportunities, including employment. Research has also found that low achievers tend to come from disadvantaged backgrounds. Recent research by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation in 2007 using the Pupil Level Annual School Census and National Pupil Database found that low achievement is strongly, although not universally, associated with disadvantage. This includes poverty, and the associated stresses of poverty, poor nutrition and health, and social class. Another key factor was the 'home learning environment' with disaffection and disruption from young people often being attributed to troubled and chaotic lives.<sup>2</sup> Doing well in education is perceived as the most effective route out of poverty and disaffection.<sup>3</sup>

It is useful therefore to consider the ways in which museums are attracting visits from schools located in areas with differing levels of social deprivation in order to see if a link might be made between pupil circumstances and attainment. In former RCMG research studies, this has been measured in two ways using the school's postcode; through the Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2004 (IMD 2004) and the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM).

### 5.2.1 The Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2004 (IMD 2004)

The IMD 2004 is based on the premise that deprivation is ultimately experienced by individuals and is a composite index derived from a series of seven sub-indices or domains of deprivation. These are Income, Employment, Health and Disability, Education, Skills and Training, Barriers to Housing and Services, Living Environment and Crime.<sup>4</sup> The IMD 2004 measures multiple deprivation at Super Output Area (SOA) level<sup>5</sup> with the intention of identifying smaller pockets of deprivation which might otherwise be hidden.<sup>6</sup> However the dataset provided by the IMD 2004 is not unproblematic, as social exclusion and deprivation are multi-dimensional problems which even multiple criteria indices may fail to represent adequately. Furthermore the

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<sup>2</sup> Cassen, R. and Kingdon, G., *Tackling Low Educational Achievement*, Joseph Rowntree Foundation / London School of Economics, 2007, p1-2

<sup>3</sup> *Every Child Matters*, <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/aims/outcomes/> [accessed 10 08 2007]

<sup>4</sup> Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, *The English Indices of Deprivation 2004: Report to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister*, Stationary Office, London, 2004

<sup>5</sup> Super output areas are aggregates of Census output areas with units of on average 1500 individuals

<sup>6</sup> Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, *The English Indices of Deprivation 2004: Report to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister*, Stationary Office, London, 2004

levels of deprivation identified by the school's postcode may not necessarily represent the levels of deprivation experienced by its pupils.<sup>7</sup>

Secondary school catchment areas are generally wider than the area identified by a school's postcode, which is used to identify the IMD 2004 rank score, and several of the Ofsted reports for the schools involved in this study indicate that they cover broad rural catchment areas.<sup>8</sup> This is despite the majority of the schools themselves being in a town or urban location as identified by the Rural and Urban Area Classification 2004.<sup>9</sup> This database classifies super output areas by their settlement 'type' – whether they are 'Urban > 10K', 'Town and fringe' or 'Village, hamlet and isolated dwelling' – and their 'sparsity' of population, based on the number of households in surrounding hectare squares up to a distance of 30km.<sup>10</sup> Using this database it is possible to show that five of the nine schools are located in areas classified as 'Urban > 10K' (Table 5.2.1a).

**Table 5.2.1a: Type of settlement in which each of the nine schools are located using the Rural and Urban Classification 2004**

School	Postcode	Lower level SOA code	Type of settlement	'Sparsity'
Downham Market High School	PE38 9LL	E01026658	Town and Fringe	Less Sparse
The Manor Community College	CB4 2JF	E01017978	Urban > 10K	Less Sparse
Hampton College	PE7 8BF	E01015649	Urban > 10K	Less Sparse
Fakenham High School and College	NR21 9QT	E01026746	Town and Fringe	Sparse
Neatherd High School	NR20 3AX	E01026430	Urban > 10K	Less Sparse
Holbrook High School	IP9 2QX	E01029897	Village, Hamlet & Isolated Dwellings	Less Sparse
Stradbroke Business and Enterprise College	IP21 5JN	E01030082	Village, Hamlet & Isolated Dwellings	Less Sparse
City of Norwich School	NR4 6PP	E01026811	Urban > 10K	Less Sparse
Rosemary Musker School	IP24 1LH	E01026472	Urban > 10K	Less Sparse

<sup>7</sup> The challenges of using the IMD 2004 have been accounted for in detail in previous RCMG research studies; see Hooper-Greenhill et al, *What did you learn at the museum today? Second Study*, 2006, p69-73

<sup>8</sup> See for example Downham Market High School, Holbrook High School and the City of Norwich School

<sup>9</sup> A joint project sponsored by the Countryside Agency, former Department for Food and Rural Affairs, Office for National Statistics, the former Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Welsh Assembly Government. *Rural and Urban Classification 2004: An introductory guide*,

[http://www.statistics.gov.uk/geography/downloads/Introductory\\_Guide.pdf](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/geography/downloads/Introductory_Guide.pdf)

[accessed 21 08 2007]

<sup>10</sup> As above, p3

This leads to a further consideration, the perceived differences between rural and urban deprivation. The East of England is more rural than England as a whole <sup>11</sup> and creates additional challenges for the use of readily available deprivation indices. As Shucksmith points out:

“...attempts to construct indices of deprivation which can be applied usefully to both rural and urban areas have been fraught with difficulty... partly because of the different meanings in rural and urban contexts of frequently used indicators such as car ownership, and the urban bias inherent in other indicators such as high-rise accommodation, but mainly because area measures are less relevant to the scattered incidence of rural deprivation, disadvantage or exclusion.” <sup>12</sup>

Therefore even the IMD 2004, with its emphasis on smaller area units, may still miss experiences of rural deprivation where “those on low incomes in rural areas [are] often living dispersed amongst relative affluence so their presence is less easily detected...” <sup>13</sup> For the purposes of comparison, however, with earlier RCMG research projects the IMD 2004 has been used for this study but its limitations mean that any conclusions reached will be presented with caution.

In the IMD 2004, the more deprived the SOA the lower its overall rank of IMD score, with the most deprived SOA in England given a rank of 1 and the least deprived a rank of 32,482. Table 5.2.1a (overleaf) gives the rank score for each of the seven domains of deprivation and the overall IMD score for each of the nine schools in this study. On the basis of the overall IMD score given to each postcode, it is suggested that most schools are not located in areas of significant deprivation, excepting The Manor Community College in Cambridge whose postcode falls into the 20%-30% most deprived SOAs in England (ranked 8,239 out of 32,482). However, by looking across the scores for the various indicators it can be seen that there may be deprivation experienced by individuals which is masked by the overall rank score.

Fig. 5.2.1a presents the rank scores for each of the nine schools for the seven domains of deprivation (see below). Whilst the Manor Community College, located in an urban area of Cambridge, scores consistently low for all domains, excepting ‘Barriers to housing and services’, it does suggest that the overall rank is masking some differences in experience of deprivation for the other schools. It can be seen that at least three schools score less well for the ‘Education, skills and training’ domain – alongside Manor Community College

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<sup>11</sup> East of England Development Agency / East of England Observatory Policy Briefing, *Rural and Urban Deprivation in the East of England*, February 2006, <http://www.eastofenglandobservatory.org.uk/viewResource.asp?uri=http://eastofenglandobservatory.org.uk/resources/?id=13931>, p3 [accessed 14 08 2007]

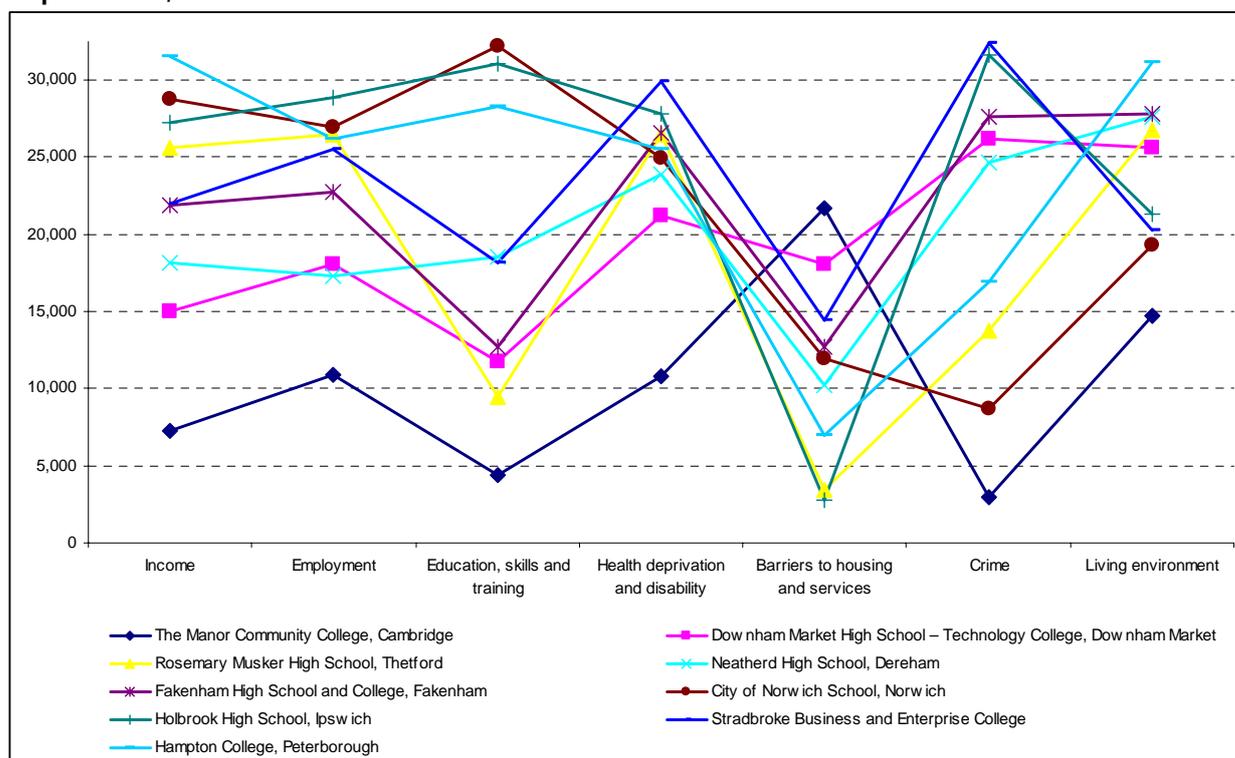
<sup>12</sup> Mark Shucksmith, *Social Exclusion in Rural Areas: A review of recent research*, DEFRA, 2003, p4, [http://www.defra.gov.uk/rural/pdfs/research/social\\_excl\\_lit\\_review.pdf](http://www.defra.gov.uk/rural/pdfs/research/social_excl_lit_review.pdf) [accessed 21 08 2007]

<sup>13</sup> *Rural Disadvantage: Reviewing the evidence*, September 2006, p20

(4,429), there is Rosemary Musker High School (9,454) and Downham Market High School (11,745).<sup>14</sup>

Notably, most schools are in areas where individuals may experience 'Barriers to housing and services'; these barriers include geographical barriers, which may reflect the rural character of much of the region, but also takes into account other barriers such as affordability of housing. Postcodes scoring low for this domain include Holbrook High School (2,755), Rosemary Musker High School (3,455) and Hampton College (6,994), only one of which is identified as being in a 'rural' location based on settlement type (Holbrook High School, see Table 5.2.1a).

**Fig. 5.2.1a: Rank scores for each of the seven IMD 2004 domains of deprivation, all schools**



<sup>14</sup> This domain measures lack of attainment among children and young people and the lack of qualifications in relation to schools

**Table 5.2.1a: Rank score for each of the seven indicators and overall score, IMD 2004, for each of the nine schools involved in the research study**

School	Rank of IMD score	Income	Employment	Education, skills and training	Health deprivation and disability	Barriers to housing and services	Crime	Living environment
The Manor Community College, Cambridge	8,239	7,269	10,852	4,429	10,793	21,720	2,951	14,731
Downham Market High School – Technology College, Downham Market	19,769	15,020	18,092	11,745	21,181	18,088	26,223	25,567
Rosemary Musker High School, Thetford	19,869	25,561	26,510	9,454	26,467	3,455	13,801	26,734
Neatherd High School, Dereham	21,297	18,132	17,323	18,571	23,918	10,194	24,630	27,591
Fakenham High School and College, Fakenham	23,999	21,889	22,765	12,692	26,525	12,670	27,571	27,798
City of Norwich School, Norwich	25,977	28,732	26,937	32,183	24,907	11,909	8,720	19,323
Holbrook High School, Ipswich	26,374	27,228	28,866	31,024	27,829	2,755	31,597	21,344
Stradbroke Business and Enterprise College	26,485	21,967	25,532	18,150	29,855	14,427	32,376	20,211
Hampton College, Peterborough	27,625	31,561	26,161	28,235	25,528	6,994	16,866	31,097

In comparison with findings from earlier reports for MLA and DCMS, analysis of the school postcodes using the overall IMD 2004 rank would suggest that the majority of these schools are not located in areas where pupils are experiencing significant levels of deprivation. For example, in the RR1:2003 evaluation 35% of schools were located in the 20% most deprived areas of England.

Furthermore, to put these findings in their regional context, it should be noted that the East of England is one of the least deprived regions in England. Although it does contain some pockets of severe deprivation, compared to the other eight regions of England, the East has the lowest number of SOAs which are ranked as the most deprived 20% of SOAs in England (220).<sup>15</sup> However as we have seen, the overall rank score may be masking deprivation in specific 'domains' and secondary schools have a larger catchment area than their postcode would imply. By looking at another commonly used indicator of deprivation, the percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals, it may be that the same or a different pattern emerges.

### 5.2.2 Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

Identifying the numbers of pupils eligible for free school meals gives a more accurate, pupil-centred indicator of deprivation than the IMD 2004, which relies on the SOA in which the school is located. Many pupils will not be resident in this SOA and so their experiences of deprivation will not be captured. However, neither are free school meals an unproblematic measure. Nearly half of pupils who receive free school meals do not go to a deprived school or live in a deprived area.<sup>16</sup> Not all pupils who are eligible for free school meals will take them up. This may be because of the perceived stigma attached to free school meals, a lack of quality or choice offered by schools, or parents not being aware that their children are entitled or they do not know how to apply.<sup>17</sup> Recently, numbers of secondary pupils eligible for free school meals have fallen slightly; from 13.6% in 2006 to 13.1% in January 2007.<sup>18</sup> There is a link made however with attainment and free school meals eligibility; pupils who receive free school meals, whether they live in deprived or non-deprived areas or attend a deprived or non-deprived school, tend to

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<sup>15</sup> *Rural and Urban Deprivation in the East of England*, 2006, p5

<sup>16</sup> 'Social Mobility: Narrowing social class educational attainment gaps', supporting materials to a speech by the Rt Hon Ruth Kelly MP Secretary for State for Education and Skills to the Institute for Public Policy Research, 26 April 2006, p15, <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/STA/t000657/SocialMobility26Apr06.pdf> [accessed 14 08 2007]

<sup>17</sup> Pamela Storey and Rosemary Chamberlain, *Improving the take up of free school meals*, Research report no. 270, DfEE, Crown Copyright, 2001, p1-2, <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/rr270.pdf> [accessed 14 08 2007]

<sup>18</sup> *Pupil characteristics and class sizes in maintained schools in England, January 2007 (Provisional)*, First release, April 2007, <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000726/SFR16-2007a.pdf> [accessed 14 08 2007]

have lower attainment than pupils who do not take up free school meals, even those non-FSM pupils who live in deprived areas.<sup>19</sup>

The distribution of pupils eligible for free school meals is highly skewed, with large numbers of schools across England containing very low percentages of pupils who are eligible, while a small number of schools have very high numbers of pupils who are eligible. To take account of this distribution, the nine schools in the East of England have been classified according to their positions within 'quartiles' in the national distribution of schools as calculated from the database of school information supplied by the DCSF (formerly DfES). The boundaries of the national quartiles are set to each encompass a quarter of schools and include primary schools as well as secondary.

As is demonstrated below in Table 5.2.2a, the majority of schools from this small sample fall into the second and third quartiles, with most schools (56%) falling into the second quartile. No schools are located in the uppermost fourth quartile which would suggest high percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals. Most schools in this sample have fewer eligible pupils than the region as a whole; the eligibility of free school meals in the East of England according to the Annual School Census in 2005 was 11.7%.<sup>20</sup> Two schools are above both the regional (11.7%) and the national average (13.1%), The Manor Community College and Downham Market High School; these two schools also ranked the 'lowest' in terms of their IMD 2004 rank compared to the other schools in this study.

**Table 5.2.2a: East of England schools ranked by the DCSF (formerly DfES) national quartiles for % of pupils eligible for free school meals**

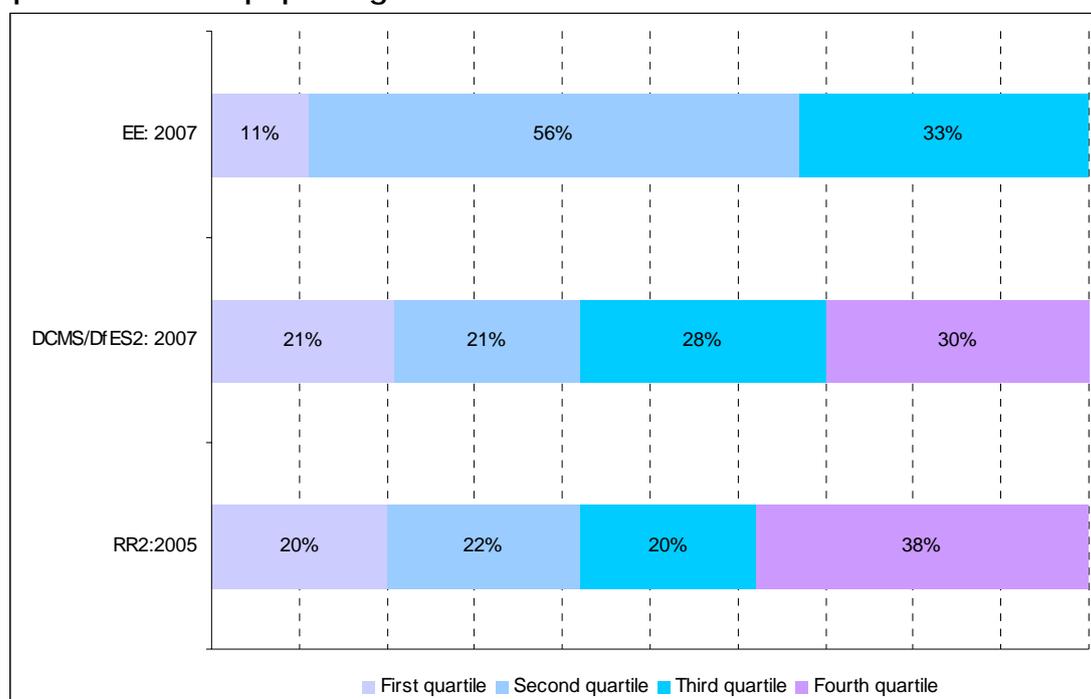
National quartile	Range of % of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	East of England schools (% of pupils eligible for free school meals)
First	0 – 4.3%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Holbrook High School (4.3%)</li> </ul>
Second	4.4 – 10.2 %	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Neatherd High School (5.5%)</li> <li>City of Norwich School (7.4%)</li> <li>Hampton College (8.7%)</li> <li>Stradbroke Business and Enterprise College (9.2%)</li> <li>Fakenham High School and College (9.5%)</li> </ul>
Third	10.3 – 22.8%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rosemary Musker High School (11.2%)</li> <li>Downham Market High School – Technology College (22.2%)</li> <li>The Manor Community College (21.5%)</li> </ul>
Fourth	22.9 – 100.0	-

<sup>19</sup> 'Social Mobility: Narrowing social class educational attainment gaps', p15, <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/STA/t000657/SocialMobility26Apr06.pdf> [accessed 14 08 2007]

<sup>20</sup> Michael Nelson and Jo Nicholas, *First annual survey of take up of free school meals in England*, School Food Trust, March 2006, p9, [http://www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk/UploadDocs/Library/Documents/sft\\_baseline\\_survey.pdf](http://www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk/UploadDocs/Library/Documents/sft_baseline_survey.pdf) [accessed 14 08 2007]

This is a different picture from that presented by two previous RCMG evaluations – RR2:2005 and DCMS/DCSF2:2007 - which found that museums were reaching an unexpectedly high number of schools located in the fourth quartile. Bearing in mind the much smaller sample size for the current study, and that the two previous studies included primary schools as well as secondary schools drawn from across a wider area of England, Fig. 5.2.2a shows the differences between the current research study (EE:2007) and two previous studies undertaken for MLA (RR2:2005) and DCMS (DCMS/DCSF2:2007). A far higher percentage of schools were located in the fourth quartile for both RR2:2005 (38%) and DCMS/DfES2:2007 (30%), and percentages for the other three quartiles were far more evenly spread. As identified above, for the nine schools involved in the current study, five schools are located in the second quartile and none of the schools are located in the fourth quartile.

**Fig. 5.2.2a: Percentage of schools ranked by the DCSF (formerly DfES) national quartiles for % of pupils eligible for free school meals**



EE:2007, N=9; DCMS/DfES2:2007, N=343; RR2:2005, N=1441

### 5.2.3 Conclusion – what does this mean for attainment?

The evidence presented above suggests that most pupils from the nine schools participating in the study are not experiencing significant disadvantage both in terms of the IMD 2004 and the free school meal data. This in turn suggests that the experience of disadvantage will potentially not have much impact on pupils' attainment. However it can be seen that reliance on the overall picture of deprivation provided by the IMD 2004 for instance can mask other indicators of deprivation such as 'barriers to services' and 'education and skills.' This potential masking of deprivation is compounded by the differences between rural and urban disadvantage and the ways in which readily available indices of deprivation favour area-based

measures which can further hide evidence of rural disadvantage. Measures such as the free school meals eligibility can also be distorted by the evidence that not all those pupils who are eligible for free school meals will take them up.

Therefore generalised sources of data can be highly problematic. Additional sources of information that focus specifically on the schools involved are potentially more helpful, for instance Ofsted inspection reports which provide local context for each school. This can draw attention to potential disadvantage, for example for The Manor Community College and Rosemary Musker High School where both Ofsted inspection reports identify that some pupils will come from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds compared to their peers. Therefore, whereas the data presented here would not suggest that deprivation has much of a bearing on pupil attainment broadly, in specific cases it may have an impact and evidence for this will be discussed in the detailed case studies.

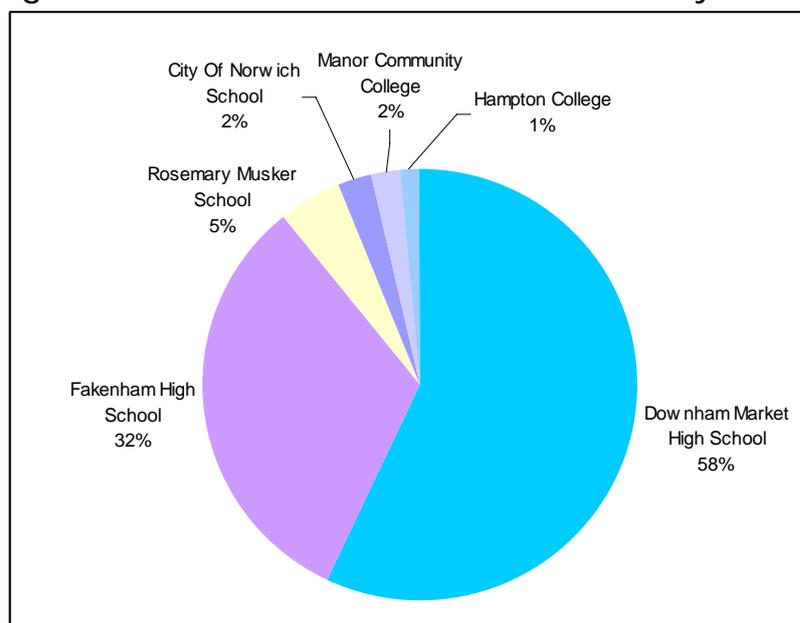
### 5.3 Form B – Pupils' questionnaire

Four hundred and fifty-one (451) KS3 and above pupils from six of the schools involved in the research study completed a Form B after their museum visit. The questionnaire asked pupils to respond to nine questions about their experience at the museum, framed using the five Generic Learning Outcomes. A copy of the questionnaire is included in Appendix 2.

#### 5.3.1 Who completed a Form B?

Looking at the proportion of questionnaires returned by the schools involved in the study, Fig. 5.3.1a shows that ninety per cent (90%) of questionnaires were returned by schools following a visit to Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse – this is Downham Market High School (58%) and Fakenham High School (32%). This 'Gressenhall effect' means that the data must be used with care in terms of attempting to find any general patterns or meanings from it.

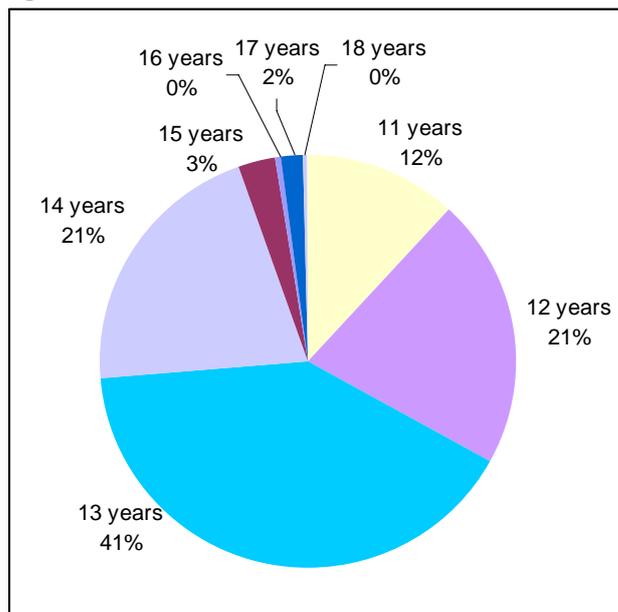
**Fig. 5.3.1a: Form B KS3 and above. Breakdown by school**



N=451

The age of the pupils completing a questionnaire ranged from 11 to 18 years old but the vast majority of pupils were aged between 11 and 14 years (95%).

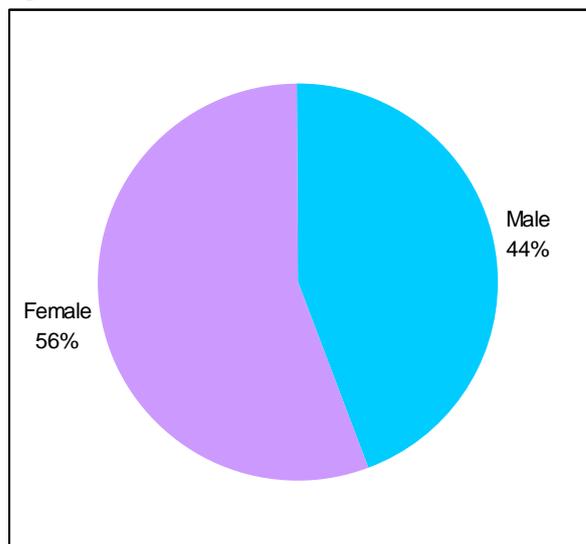
**Fig. 5.3.1b: Form B KS3 and above. Breakdown by age**



N=439

Of the 441 pupils who indicated their gender, the majority were female (56%).

**Fig. 5.3.1c: Form B KS3 and above. Breakdown by gender**



N=441

### 5.3.2 An overview of responses for Form B KS3 and above

On the whole, pupils were very positive about their museum experience. Over 90% of pupils agreed that they had enjoyed their experience and that they had discovered some interesting things from the visit. Eighty-nine per cent (89%) felt that the museum was a good place to learn in a different way from school, whilst 85% agreed that the visit had given them a better understanding of the subject. A very positive 84% of pupils could make sense of most of things they did at the museum, and 78% of pupils felt more inspired

as a result. In contrast, pupils were quite cautious in their enthusiasm for visiting the museum again (63%). However in a region that is more rural than the rest of the country, physical distance and the associated challenges of transport to reach museums such as Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse becomes a greater issue perhaps than in urban areas. Young people may have less independence and therefore have less choice over their leisure and social activities.<sup>21</sup>

Table 5.3.2a shows the pupils' responses to all questions on Form B.

**Table 5.3.2a: Form B KS3 and above. Breakdown of pupils' responses**

<b>KS3 and above pupils</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
I enjoyed today's visit	91%	2%	6%
I discovered some interesting things from the visit today	91%	4%	5%
A visit to a museum / gallery makes school work more inspiring	78%	10%	12%
The visit has given me a better understanding of the subject	85%	6%	9%
A museum visit is a good chance to pick up new skills	70%	9%	21%
The museum is a good place to learn in a different way to school	90%	4%	6%
I could make sense of most of the things we saw and did at the museum	84%	5%	10%
I would come again	63%	9%	28%
I've left the museum more interested in the subject than when I came	71%	9%	20%

Q.1,3,4,6&9, N=449; Q.2,5,7&8, N=450 (missing excluded)

### 5.3.3 Reviewing the responses of pupils according to gender

Looking at the data across gender, girls appear to be generally more enthusiastic in their responses to most of the questions, a familiar finding in earlier RCMG research studies for MLA and DCMS. However as Table and Fig. 5.3.3a below show, boys are not far behind.

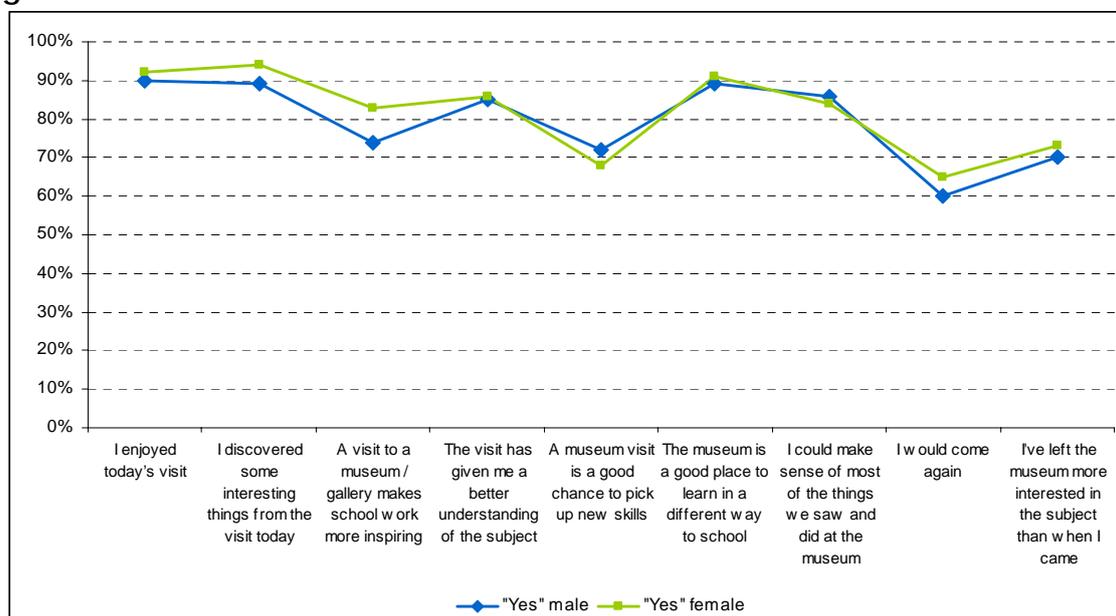
<sup>21</sup> See for instance Shucksmith, 'Young people and social exclusion in rural areas,' *Sociologia Ruralis*, Vol 44, Number 1, January 2004

**Table 5.3.3a: Form B KS3 and above. Breakdown of pupils' 'Yes' responses by gender**

KS3 and above pupils	'Yes' male	'Yes' female
I enjoyed today's visit	90%	92%
I discovered some interesting things from the visit today	89%	94%
A visit to a museum / gallery makes school work more inspiring	74%	83%
The visit has given me a better understanding of the subject	85%	86%
A museum visit is a good chance to pick up new skills	72%	68%
The museum is a good place to learn in a different way to school	89%	91%
I could make sense of most of the things we saw and did at the museum	86%	84%
I would come again	60%	65%
I've left the museum more interested in the subject than when I came	70%	73%

Male, N=195; Female, N=246

**Fig. 5.3.3a: Form B KS3 and above. Breakdown of pupils' 'Yes' responses by gender**

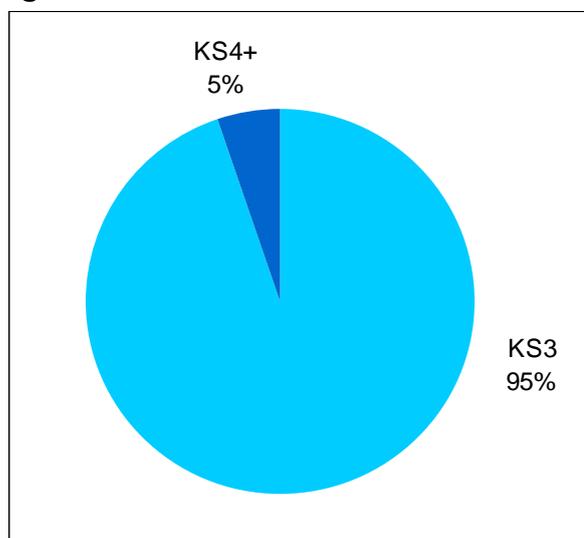


Male, N=195; Female, N=246

### 5.3.4 Reviewing the responses of pupils according to age

Ninety-five per cent (95%) of pupils completing a Form B were at Key Stage 3 and 5% of pupils were at Key Stage 4 and above.

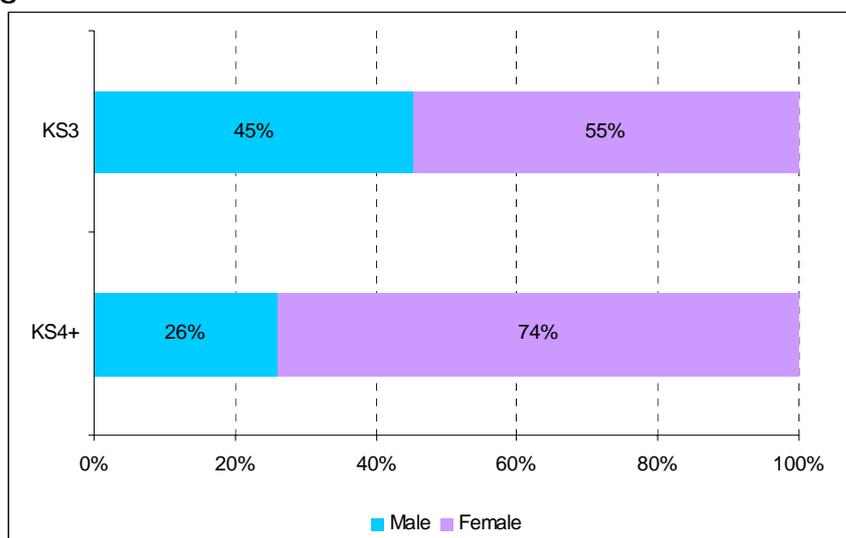
Fig. 5.3.4a: Form B KS3 and above. Breakdown of pupils by Key Stage



KS3 pupils, N=415; KS4+ pupils, N=23

The gender split for each Key Stage is slightly different with there being proportionally more female pupils in the KS4+ group (74% female, 26% male) compared to KS3 pupils (55% female, 45% male).

Fig. 5.3.4b: Form B KS3 and above. Breakdown of pupils by Key Stage and gender



KS3 pupils, N=415; KS4+ pupils, N=23

Bearing in mind the much smaller sample size for KS4+ pupils, generally they were much more enthusiastic than pupils of KS3 age, finding the museum visit more inspiring (97% of KS4+ pupils compared to 77% of KS3 pupils) and they were also more inclined to want to visit the museum again (88% of KS4+ pupils

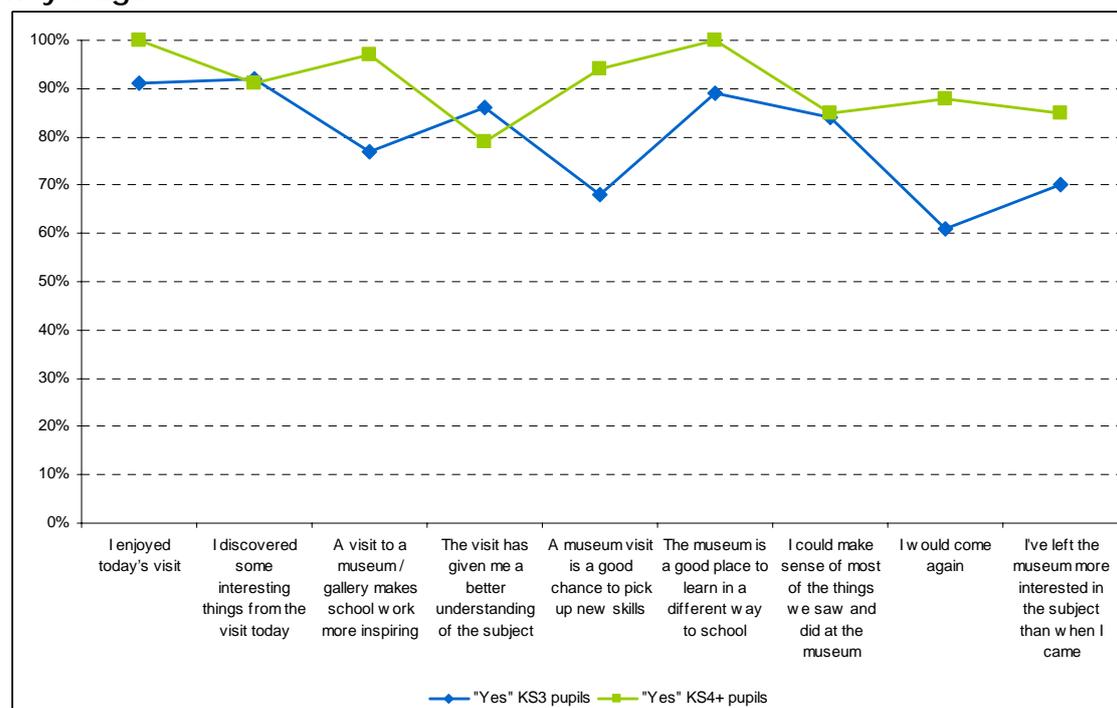
compared to 61% of KS3 pupils). However slightly more KS3 pupils felt the visit enabled them to understand their subject better - perhaps some KS4+ pupils, who can chose the subjects they wish to study, already felt that they understood their subject enough?

**Table 5.3.4a: Form B, KS3 and above. Breakdown of pupils' 'Yes' responses by Key Stage**

KS3 and above pupils	'Yes' KS3 pupils	'Yes' KS4+ pupils
I enjoyed today's visit	91%	100%
I discovered some interesting things from the visit today	92%	91%
A visit to a museum / gallery makes school work more inspiring	77%	97%
The visit has given me a better understanding of the subject	86%	79%
A museum visit is a good chance to pick up new skills	68%	94%
The museum is a good place to learn in a different way to school	89%	100%
I could make sense of most of the things we saw and did at the museum	84%	85%
I would come again	61%	88%
I've left the museum more interested in the subject than when I came	70%	85%

KS3 pupils, N=415; KS4+ pupils, N=23

**Fig. 5.3.4c: Form B, KS3 and above. Breakdown of pupils' 'Yes' responses by Key Stage**



KS3 pupils, N=415; KS4+ pupils, N=23

Both groups of KS4+ pupils worked with the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, whereas the majority of the KS3 pupils experienced a visit to Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse. This may explain some of the key differences. For example pupils visiting Gressenhall may have been aware of the challenges of travelling to a rural museum and so felt less likely to be able to visit again. The nature of the sessions may also have led to differences in response for example far more KS4+ pupils felt the museum was a chance to pick up new skills than KS3 pupils.

### 5.3.5 Reviewing the responses for pupils - allowing for the “Gressenhall Effect”

In order to see the impact of the large number of questionnaires completed by pupils after a session at Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse, the ‘Yes’ responses have been separated for the two schools visiting Gressenhall (Downham Market High School and Fakenham High School) and compared with results from the other four schools who completed Form B in the study (categorised as ‘Other’).

The findings are presented in Table and Fig. 5.3.35a below.

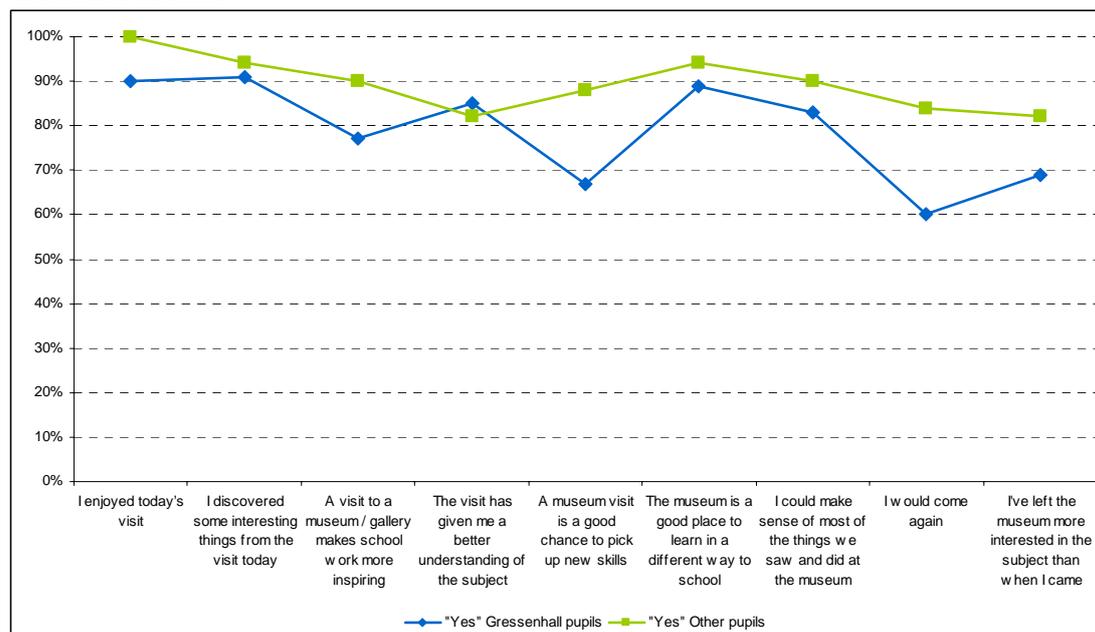
Pupils visiting Gressenhall appear more measured in their responses to the questionnaire when compared to the pupils visiting ‘Other’ museums, although for some questions the responses are very similar. This might be explained by the fact that Gressenhall visits entailed the entire year group, reflected in the larger sample, whereas the ‘Other’ museum visits were made by much smaller groups of pupils. It is worth noting that far fewer pupils visiting Gressenhall felt that they would pick up skills as a result of the museum visit, which may be a reflection of the content of the sessions, and they were less likely to think that they would visit again, although this has been noted earlier in relation to Gressenhall’s rural location.

**Table 5.3.5a: Form B, KS3 and above. Breakdown of pupils’ ‘Yes’ responses by museum visited**

KS3 and above pupils	‘Yes’ Gressenhall pupils	‘Yes’ Other pupils
I enjoyed today’s visit	90%	100%
I discovered some interesting things from the visit today	91%	94%
A visit to a museum / gallery makes school work more inspiring	77%	90%
The visit has given me a better understanding of the subject	85%	82%
A museum visit is a good chance to pick up new skills	67%	88%
The museum is a good place to learn in a different way to school	89%	94%
I could make sense of most of the things we saw and did at the museum	83%	90%
I would come again	60%	84%
I’ve left the museum more interested in the subject than when I came	69%	82%

Gressenhall, N=402; Other, N=49

**Fig. 5.3.5a: Form B, KS3 and above. Breakdown of pupils' 'Yes' responses by museum visited**



Gressenhall, N=402; Other, N=49

### 5.3.6 Reviewing the responses of pupils in comparison with the four recent RCMG studies

The questionnaires used for this research study were adapted from questionnaires used successfully in four previous research studies undertaken by RCMG for MLA and DCMS. In Table 5.3.6a and Figures 5.3.6a and 5.3.6b below the 'yes' responses from the present East of England study are compared with these four earlier studies.

It should be noted that there were some changes made to the questionnaire for older pupils in some of the research studies to adjust for the different nature of the museum experience and to reflect changes in the research methodology over time. The questionnaire used for the East of England research was most similar to that used for RR2:2005.

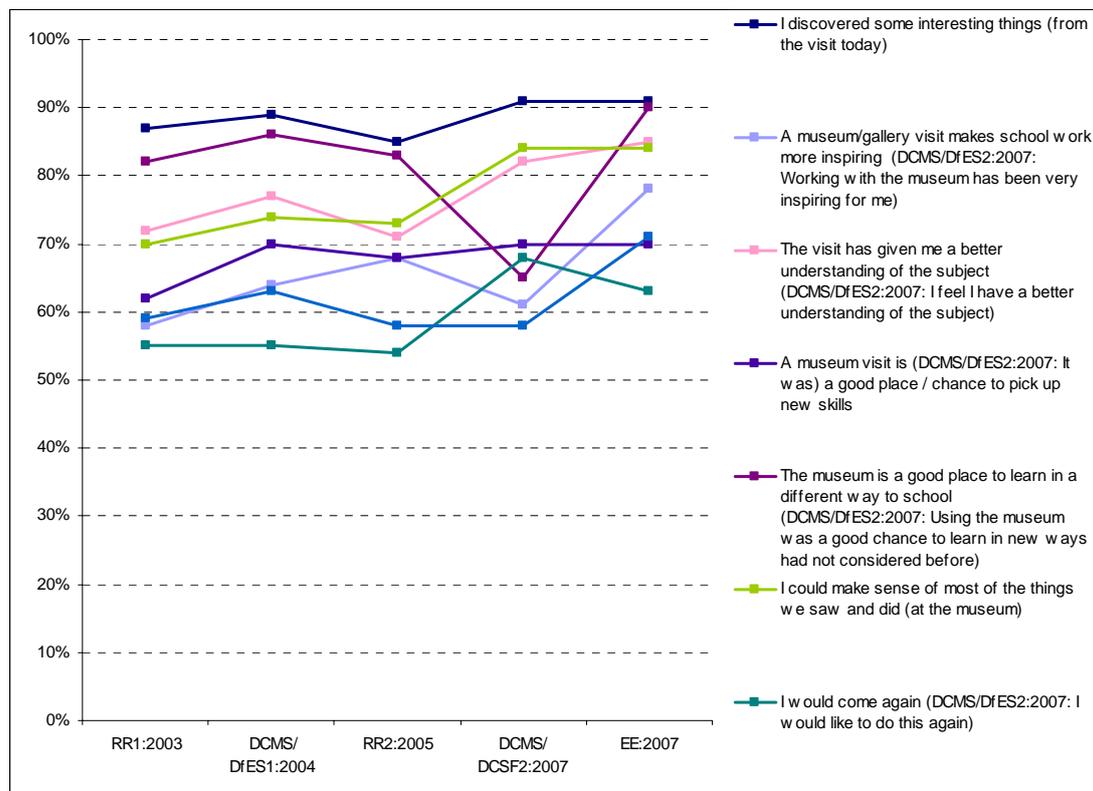
In the East of England study pupils show high levels of enjoyment and interest comparable to pupils in earlier studies. Most telling is that pupils enjoyed the visit as a good place to learn in a different way to school; pupils' responses here are higher than previous studies (90% compared to 65%-86%), although the relatively low response from the DCMS/DCSF2:2007 study may have been a result of altering the sense of the question. Pupils also felt that their school work became more inspiring as a result of the visit than pupils in previous studies (78% compared to 58%-68%). However, even though it seemed that pupils from the East of England were less enthusiastic about visiting the museum again, their response is actually very similar to previous studies (63% compared to 55%-68%).

**Table 5.3.6a: Form B KS3 and above. What older pupils said about their learning, comparing EE:2007 with RR1:2003, DCMS/DfES1:2004, RR2:2005 and DCMS/DCSF2:2007**

Older pupils (Key Stage 3 and above)	'Yes' RR1:2003	'Yes' DCMS/ DfES1:2004	'Yes' RR2:2005	'Yes' DCMS/ DCSF2:2007	'Yes' EE:2007
I enjoyed today's visit (DCMS/DfES2:2007: I enjoyed today)	n/a	n/a	86%	91%	<b>91%</b>
Today's visit has given me lots to think about	73%	77%	n/a	n/a	<b>n/a</b>
I discovered some interesting things (from the visit today)	87%	89%	85%	91%	<b>91%</b>
A museum/gallery visit makes school work more inspiring (DCMS/DfES2:2007: Working with the museum has been very inspiring for me)	58%	64%	68%	61%	<b>78%</b>
The visit has given me a better understanding of the subject (DCMS/DfES2:2007: I feel I have a better understanding of the subject)	72%	77%	71%	82%	<b>85%</b>
A museum visit is (DCMS/DfES2:2007: It was) a good place / chance to pick up new skills	62%	70%	68%	70%	<b>70%</b>
The museum is a good place to learn in a different way to school (DCMS/DfES2:2007: Using the museum was a good chance to learn in new ways I had not considered before)	82%	86%	83%	65%	<b>90%</b>
I could make sense of most of the things we saw and did (at the museum)	70%	74%	73%	84%	<b>84%</b>
I would come again (DCMS/DfES2:2007: I would like to do this again)	55%	55%	54%	68%	<b>63%</b>
I've left the museum (DCMS/DfES2:2007: I am now much) more interested in the subject than when I came (started)	59%	63%	58%	58%	<b>71%</b>

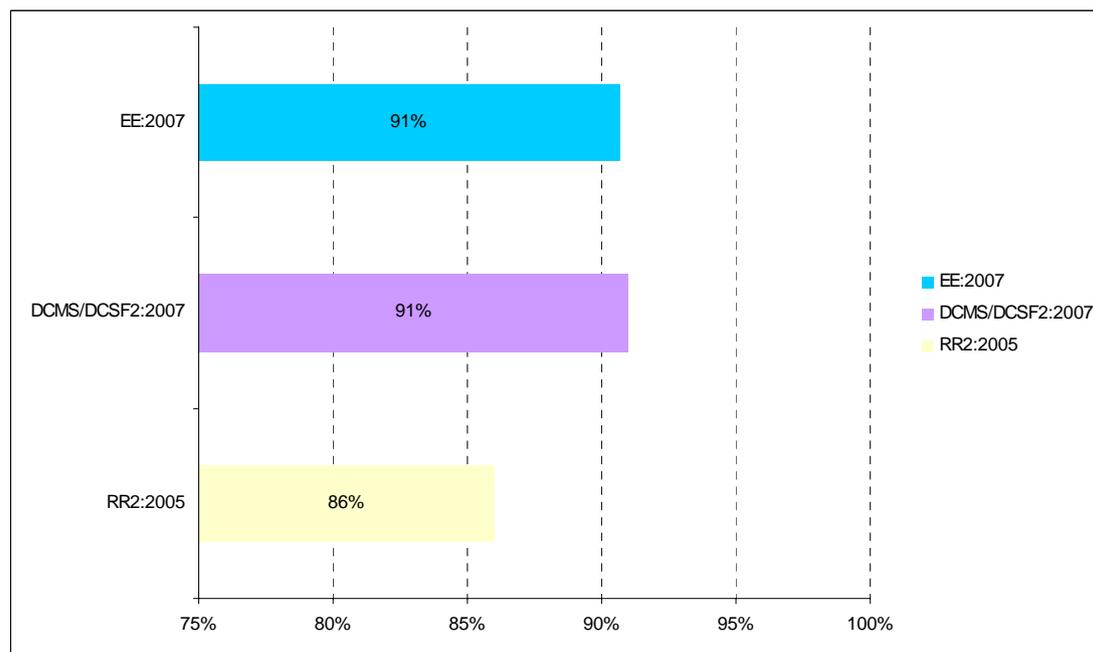
RR1:2003, N=3406, DCMS/DfES1:2004, N=2061, RR2:2005, N=4946, DCMS/DCSF2:2007, N=3337; EE:2007, N=451

**Fig. 5.3.6a: Form B KS3 and above. What older pupils said about their learning, comparing EE:2007 with RR1:2003, DCMS/DfES1:2004, RR2:2005 and DCMS/DCSF2:2007**



RR1:2003, N=3406, DCMS/DfES1:2004, N=2061, RR2:2005, N=4946, DCMS/DCSF2:2007, N=3337; EE:2007, N=451

**Fig. 5.3.6b: Form B, KS3 and above. 'I enjoyed today's visit (DCMS/DCSF2: 2007: I enjoyed today)', comparing EE:2007 with DCMS/DCSF2:2007 and RR2:2005**



RR2:2005, N=4946, DCMS/DCSF2:2007, N=3337; EE:2007, N=451

The ability to 'test' the data set against findings from four previous studies draws attention to the significance of having a larger body of data in which to nest the findings, with evidence from 13,750 pupils surveyed across England over four years.

### 5.3.7 Conclusion - linking positive learning experiences with attainment

The sense from the museum visit using the evidence provided by Form B is that pupils enjoyed their visit highly and found it a very favourable way to learn in comparison to school. They felt inspired by what they did and it was geared towards their learning as most pupils could make sense of most of what they did at the museum. This was true for pupils of both genders and for both KS3 and KS4+ pupils although there were some slight differences in the responses of these pupils.

## 5.4 Assessment marks

In total, eight schools involved in the study provided useable assessment marks for 762 pupils involved in a museum visit or related project. Where groups working with the museum were smaller, some schools provided us with an additional 80 marks for pupils who did not take part in the museum-based work which meant that some comparisons could be made in terms of impact of attainment but only for those schools individually.

Table 5.4a shows a breakdown of how many pupils with assessment marks were provided by each school, and if they provided additional marks for pupils who were not involved in the museum project.

**Table 5.4a: Assessment marks. Breakdown by school**

School	Number of pupils with assessment marks	Additional marks for pupils who did not take part in the museum project
Neatherd High School	219	-
Downham Market High School	275	-
Holbrook High School	7	45
City of Norwich School	13	25
The Manor Community College	49	-
Fakenham High School and College	138	-
Rosemary Musker High School	22	10
Hampton College	39	-
Stradbroke Business and Enterprise College	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>762</b>	<b>80</b>

In this section, the overall findings from the assessment marks are presented, combining all the data from the eight schools for the pupils who were involved in a museum visit or related project.

For the method of how the assessment marks were analysed, please see Section 4: Research methods. The variation in the data provided by schools means that great care has been taken when interpreting these results and particularly not to over-claim the potential impact of the museum visit as there may be a number of other factors influencing pupil progression.

Furthermore, there were a number of challenges when analysing the assessment marks which reinforces the need to be careful when interpreting the findings, these are summarised as follows:

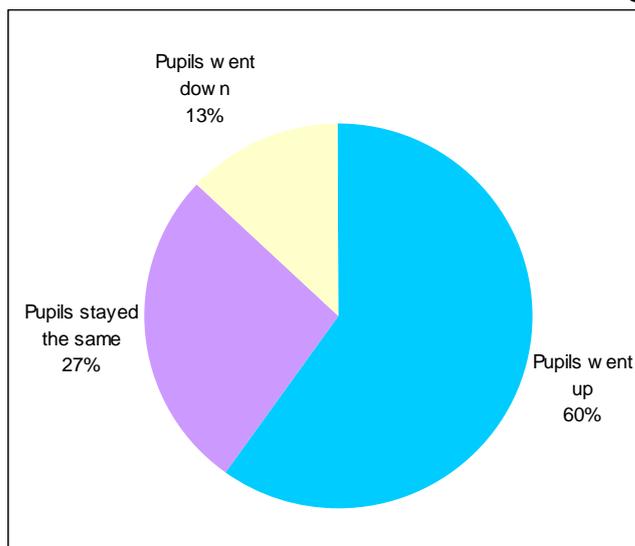
- Not all schools were able to provide three previous marks for all pupils – this means that where only one previous mark is available progression may be ‘seen’ in the museum assignment where there may not actually be any, e.g. pupils may have produced work at a similar standard previously
- Fluctuation between previous marks – some pupils varied widely in their previous assignment marks which meant a judgement had to be made as to their ‘average’ level in order to make a comparison with the museum-related assignment. The teacher’s judgement about a pupil’s progression was used wherever this had been provided
- Not comparing like with like – analysing and comparing the assessment marks numerically does not take into account the pupils’ experience of the assignment, for instance whether they found it more difficult or easier than previous assignments or the differences between subjects

These concerns were borne in mind when interpreting the findings of the assessment marks analysis and therefore they are presented as very tentative.

#### **5.4.1 The overall picture – the impact of the museum visit on attainment**

Combining all the data from the eight schools that provided assessment marks, the data shows that most pupils (60%) went up in their museum-based assignment when compared with up to three of their previous assignment marks. This is a very positive finding.

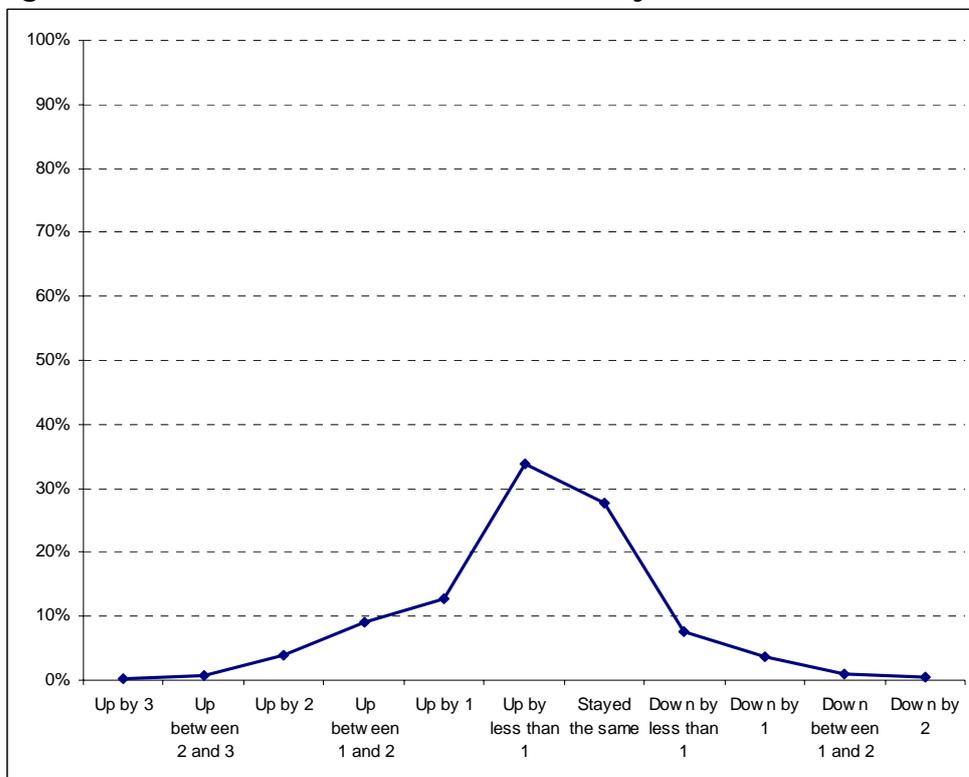
**Fig. 5.4.1a: Assessment marks. Breakdown by whether pupils went up, stayed the same or fell in their museum-related assignment marks**



N=762

In terms of how much their marks went up by, the largest proportion of pupils saw their marks / grades increase by 'less than 1' (34%); much smaller percentages of pupils saw their marks increase or decrease by 1 level/grade or more.

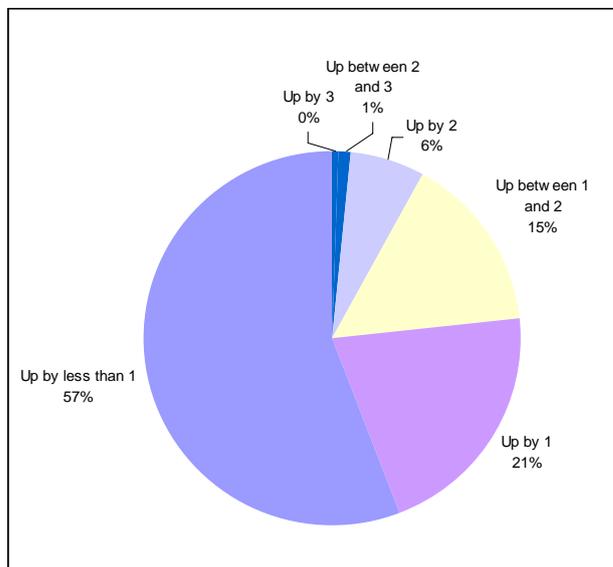
**Fig. 5.4.1b: Assessment marks. Breakdown by rate of increase or decrease**



N=762

Taking the 457 pupils who 'went up' in their marks separately, we can see more clearly that the majority of pupils went up by 'less than 1' level or mark (57%).

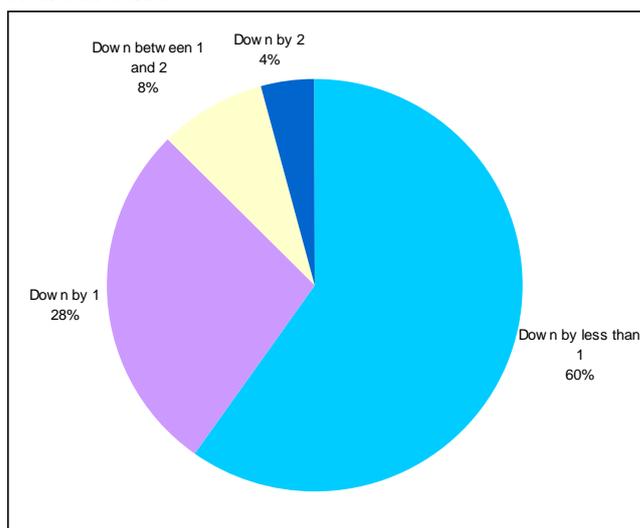
**Fig. 5.4.1c: Assessment marks. Breakdown for pupils who went up by rate of increase**



N=457

Equally, for the 97 pupils who experienced a relative decrease in their marks this tended to be 'less than 1' level or mark (60%).

**Fig. 5.4.1d: Assessment marks. Breakdown for pupils who went down by rate of decrease**

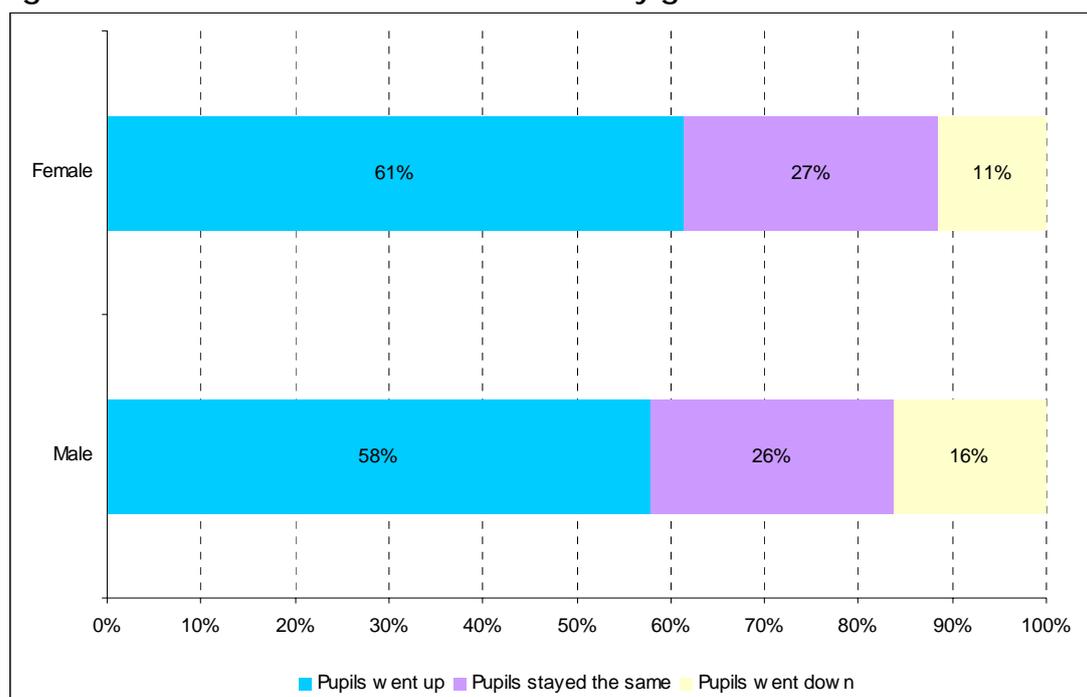


N=97

### 5.4.2 The impact of gender on attainment

In the current educational climate, boys are not thought to achieve as well as girls or to be as interested in learning.<sup>22</sup> Not every school supplied the gender of their pupils but it is a very positive finding that from those marks we were given, there is only a slight difference in the achievement of boys and girls in their museum-based assignment. Fifty-eight (58%) of boys and 61% of girls experienced an increase in their marks for that assignment compared to their previous marks.

Fig. 5.4.2a: Assessment marks. Breakdown by gender



Male, N=333; Female, N=386

### 5.4.3 The impact of ability on attainment

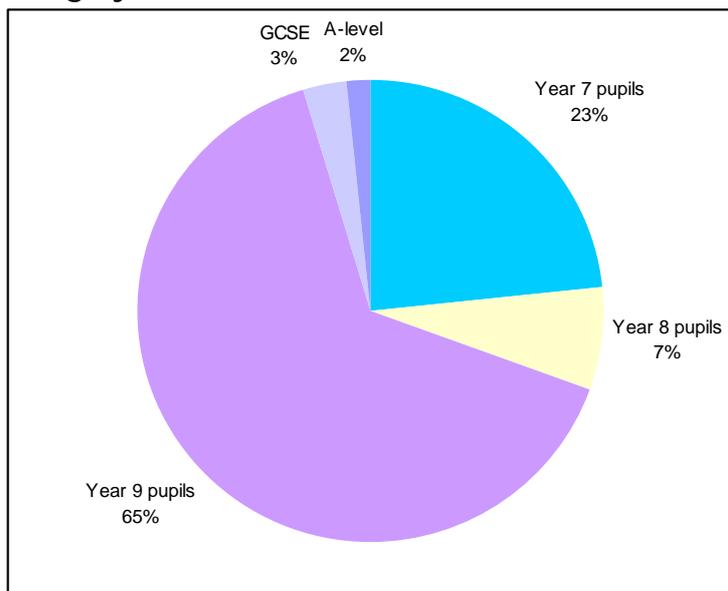
The challenges of analysing the assessment marks in terms of ability have been outlined in Section 4: Research Methods. Still, it is apt to note here the disparity in sample sizes both for each of the Year groups represented in the data and in the categories identified as:

- 'Lower ability' pupils (achieving below expected levels for their age)
- 'Average ability' pupils (achieving at the level expected for their age)
- 'Higher ability' pupils (achieving beyond expected levels for their age)

In terms of year group, the sample is made up predominantly of Year 9 pupils (60%) due to the two large year groups from Downham Market High School and Neatherd High School taking part in the study (Fig. 5.4.3a). Pupils of GCSE and A-level age are represented in the smallest categories, 3% and 2% respectively.

<sup>22</sup> See for instance Cassen, R. and Kingdon, G., *Tackling Low Educational Achievement*, Joseph Rowntree Foundation / London School of Economics, 2007, p21

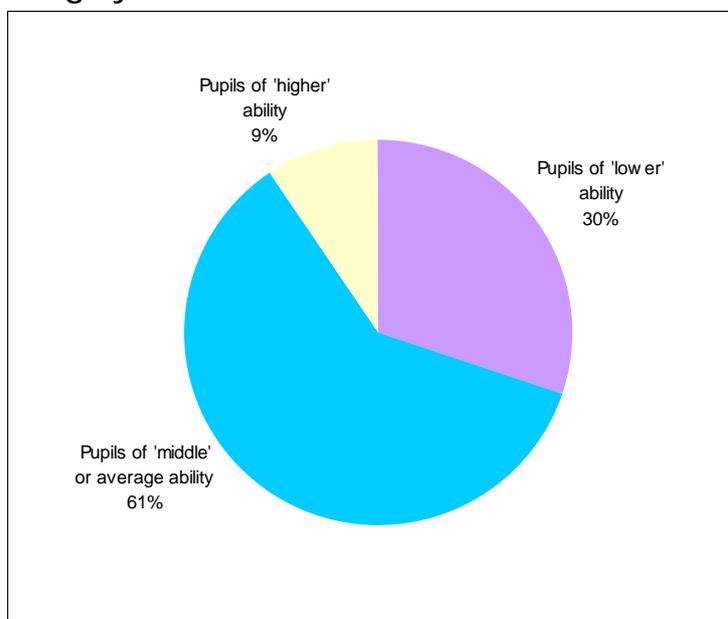
**Fig. 5.4.3a: Assessment marks. Percentage of pupils in each Year group category**



N=762

In terms of the ability-related categories established for analysis, there is a predominance of 'middle' or average ability pupils (61%) with, as might be expected, smaller proportions of 'lower' ability (30%) and 'higher' ability pupils (9%).

**Fig. 5.4.3b: Assessment marks. Percentage of pupils in each ability-related category**

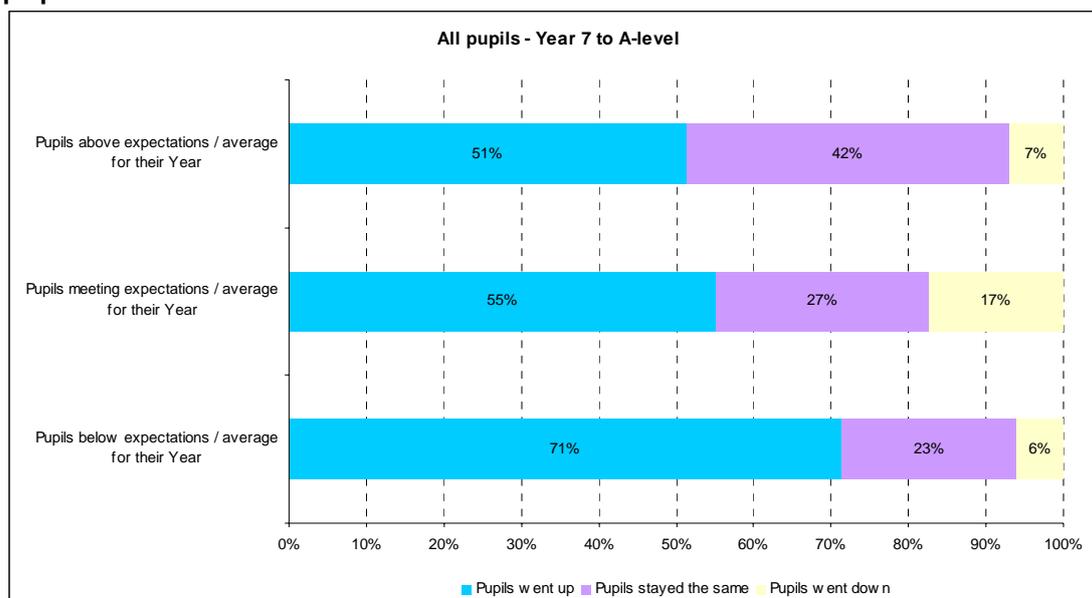


N=762

When all pupils are considered together from all Year groups it appears that a higher proportion of 'lower ability' pupils (those pupils achieving below

average grades or not meeting expected National Curriculum levels for their age) increased their marks in the museum-related assignment compared to previous assignment marks. As a proportion of 'lower ability' pupils, 71% saw their marks increase for their museum-based assignment compared to previous assignments. This is compared to 55% of 'average ability' pupils and 51% of 'higher ability' pupils.

**Fig. 5.4.3c: Assessment marks. Breakdown by ability-related categories, all pupils**

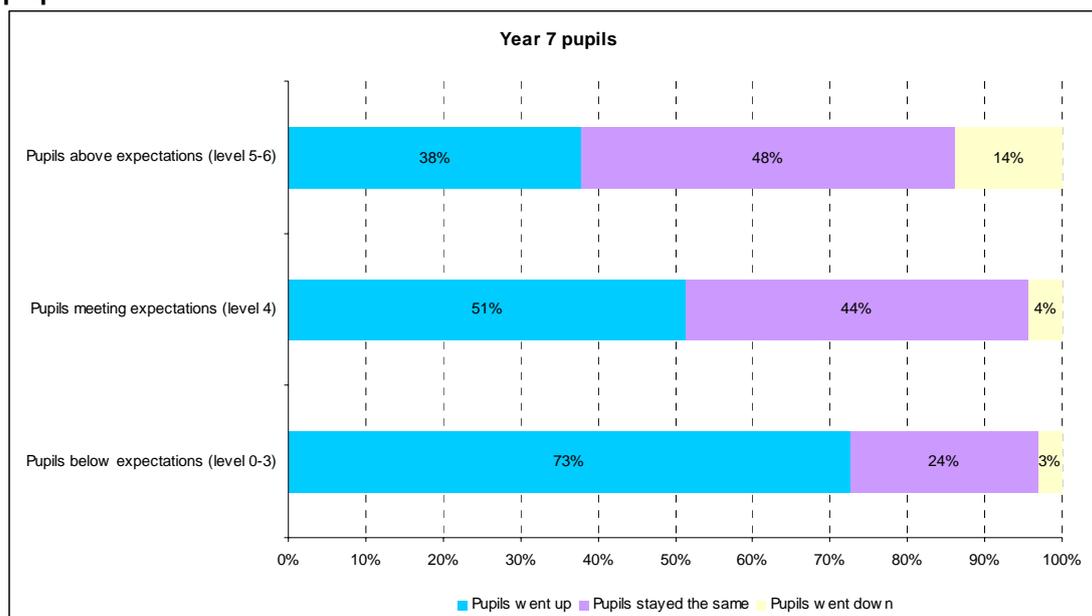


Pupils above expectations / average, N=72; Pupils meeting expectations / average, N=459; Pupils below expectations / average, N=231

This evidence suggests that museum visits are beneficial for pupils of all abilities, with the majority of pupils seeing an improvement in their museum-related assignments. However this is particularly true for 'lower ability' pupils which is consistent with previous RCMG research studies it was felt that the museum learning experience was especially beneficial for 'lower ability' pupils or those with special educational needs as it allowed them to learn in a different way to school. This overall picture however does mask some differences for each year group, suggesting that there is not a 'simple' connection between ability and likelihood of increased attainment.

For Year 7 pupils (from Fakenham High School and Hampton College) the picture is similar to the overall pattern, with a higher proportion of 'lower ability' pupils seeing an improvement in their marks in the museum-based assignment; 78% compared to only 38% for 'higher ability' pupils and 51% for 'average ability' pupils. However note that numbers of 'lower ability' and 'higher ability' pupils are far smaller compared to numbers of 'average ability' pupils (Fig. 5.4.3d below).

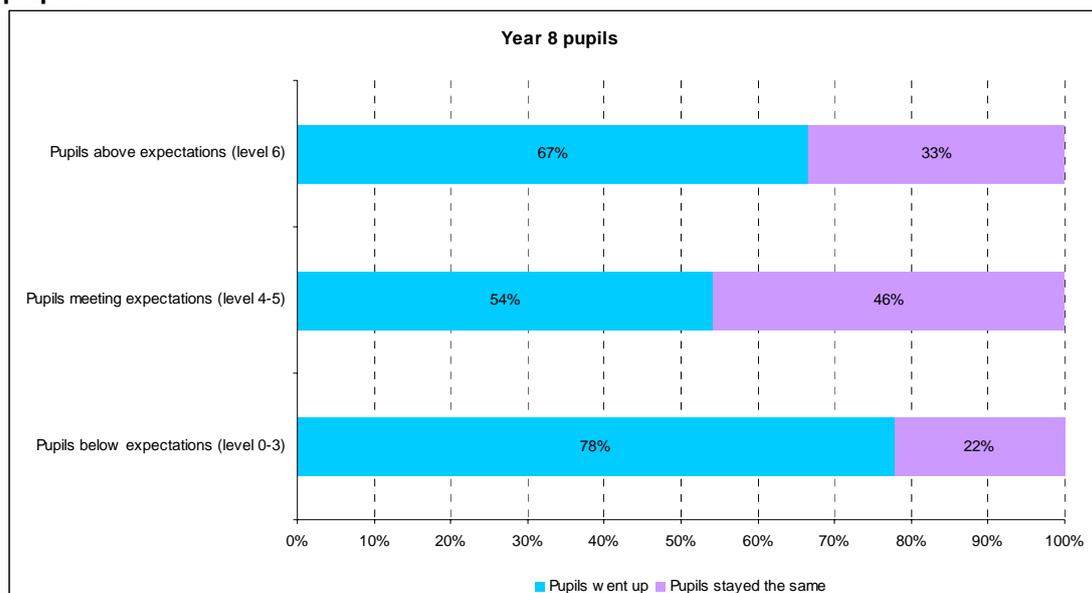
**Fig. 5.4.3d: Assessment marks. Breakdown by ability-related categories, Year 7 pupils**



Pupils above expectations / average, N=29; Pupils meeting expectations / average, N=115; Pupils below expectations / average, N=33

For Year 8 pupils (from Holbrook High School and The Manor Community College) it is notable that no pupils saw a decrease in their marks in their museum-related assignment. The pattern is similar to the overall finding with the majority of all pupils able to show an increase in their marks but the size for each category is extremely small. These two schools were potentially different from other schools in the sample in that they took smaller groups of pupils to the museum.

**Fig. 5.4.3e: Assessment marks. Breakdown by ability-related categories, Year 8 pupils**

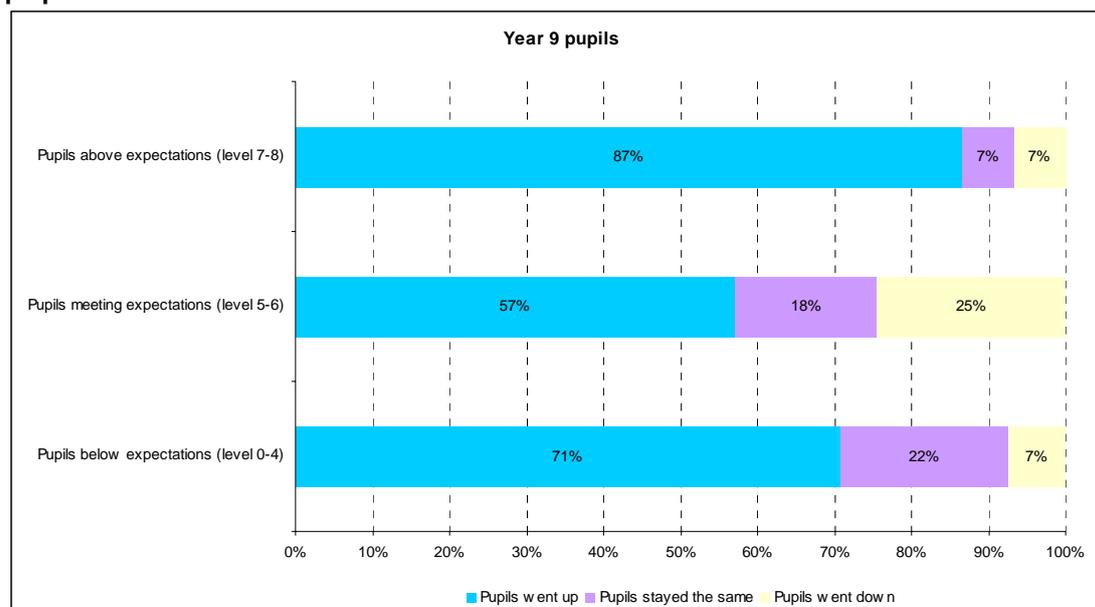


Pupils above expectations / average, N=3; Pupils meeting expectations / average, N=35; Pupils below expectations / average, N=18

For Year 9 pupils (from Downham Market High School and Neatherd High School) it was the 'higher ability' pupils who saw the highest proportion of pupils increasing their mark in their museum-related assignment (87%). They were also the smallest group with only 15 pupils.

'Lower ability' pupils are not far behind however with 71% seeing an increase in their marks for their museum-related assignment.

**Fig. 5.4.3f: Assessment marks. Breakdown by ability-related categories, Year 9 pupils**



Pupils above expectations / average, N=15; Pupils meeting expectations / average, N=301; Pupils below expectations / average, N=178

For the GCSE group from Rosemary Musker High School and A-level group from City of Norwich School, the numbers were too small to identify if the ability of the pupil had a bearing on their attainment in the assessment.

#### 5.4.4 Conclusion – did the museum visit have an impact on attainment?

Judging from the evidence from the assignment marks provided by schools, for many pupils the positive experience at the museum reported in Form B – Pupils' questionnaire is translated into an increase in marks or grades for their museum-related assignment when compared with previous assignment marks. Boys were not very far behind girls in terms of their achievement and the majority of pupils of all abilities demonstrated an increase in their marks for their museum-based assignments. This was particularly the case for 'lower ability' pupils although there were differences between Year groups and some groups, such as GCSE and A-level students, were felt to be too small to discern any such pattern in the data.

We can say with some certainty that museums appear to be having a positive impact on attainment when marks are compared for an assessed piece of work. Only 13% of pupils in the sample saw their marks fall in their

museum-based assignment compared to their previous marks and it is interesting to consider why these pupils did not respond to the visit in the way that the majority of their peers did, or were not able to produce a standard of work which was deemed to be satisfactory or of a standard compared to their previous marks.

The overall picture masks considerable differences between the different schools and even the different year groups. And this is only a tentative picture and there may be other reasons for pupils showing an increase or decrease in their marks. Other factors that influence pupil increase in attainment need be taken into consideration, for example the museum-based assignment may have been particularly challenging for pupils compared to previous assignments. In this respect, Section 5.5 looks at each of the nine schools in turn to compare both responses from Form B – Pupils' questionnaire (where these are available) with the assessment marks to gauge if through looking at both sources of data together, it can shed any more light on the findings presented above.

### **5.5 The schools involved in the research study**

The nine secondary schools involved in the research study were selected because they were undertaking an assessed piece of work in conjunction with a museum visit. In terms of the sessions that they undertook at the museums, however, these can be seen as different models of engagement that are possible between museums and schools. Some of these sessions have been developed between the school and the museum over a long period of time, whilst others can be seen as more 'off the peg.' The possible impact of these different partnerships between museums and schools on the learning experiences for pupils is an issue that will be discussed further in the case studies (Section 6).

For reference, the different models of engagement between the schools and museums in this study are summarised in Table 5.5a below. The different models that are available emphasises that there is a great deal of choice available for schools in the way that they can use museums and other cultural organisations depending on the needs of their pupils and the needs of the assessment.

The evidence from Section 5 so far suggests that taken together, museums can have a positive impact on attainment when pupils have completed an assignment following a museum visit. The remainder of Section 5 takes each of the nine schools involved in the research study and analyses separately the Form B (where supplied) and assessment marks to see if such an analysis can shed more light on the potential impact that the museum visit has on pupil attainment.

**Table 5.5a: Models of engagement for the schools visiting museums in this study**

School(s)	Museum	Assignment	Model of engagement – main features
Downham Market High School	Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse	'Was the workhouse so bad?' History	Whole year group visits over several days Whole day 'Theatre in Education' -led (facilitators in role) Use of the site – 19 <sup>th</sup> century workhouse
Neatherd High School Fakenham High School	Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse	'Houses, homes and habitats' Geography	Whole year group visits over several days Whole day 'Theatre in Education' -led (facilitators in role) Use of the site – farm and grounds
Holbrook High School	Suffolk Archives	'How important was Thomas Clarkson's role in the abolition of the slave trade?' History	Small group of pupils (7) from two classes After-school club – visits to the archive after school Access to documents belonging to and relating to Thomas Clarkson and abolition of slavery Resources used back in the classroom with all pupils
City of Norwich School	Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts	A-level Art (philosophy and maths)	Artist-led (sculptor) Pupils develop their own response to a piece of artwork
Rosemary Musker High School	Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts	GCSE Art	Whole day session Artist-led Two groups over two days Pupils develop a piece of artwork in response to the collections (using the Studio)
Hampton College	Peterborough Museum	'The Stone Age Murder Mystery' History	Working in the classroom with museum loans boxes Visit to the museum
Stradbroke Business and Enterprise College	Moyses Hall	Theme of crime and punishment History	Museum visit
Manor Community College	Fitzwilliam Museum	'Wordscapes' English	3 classes over 3 days (two mixed, one lower ability) Whole day Pupils developing language and writing skills in response to the collections (paintings) Museum educator - led

### 5.5.1 Downham Market High School (Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse)

The whole of Year 9 from Downham Market High School visited Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse over three days and in total 257 pupils completed a Form B after their visit. The evidence from these Form Bs suggests that pupils were very positive about their experience. They discovered lots of interesting things from their visit (97%), presumably to help them write their assignment 'Was the workhouse so bad?' Some pupils were explicit about the link between their visit and how it would help them write their assignment in response to the open question 'The most interesting thing about today was...'

*Learning how strict they were in the schools and how they learnt. Also how harsh they were. I am glad I came as I feel that I will do better in my assignment when I get back to school.*

A very high percentage of pupils felt that the visit helped them to gain a better understanding of the subject (95%), meaning the history of the workhouse. One pupil wrote that the most interesting thing for them was:

*...the way they taught in the school and the way they treated one and another (the workers). I think this will help me with my essay as I got a real sense of what it was like.*

A second pupil commented:

*We learned about the schools which I found interesting. I found the role play every good and entertaining, that helped me learn even more than I would have usually. It helped me understand the different points of view. PS I liked Mr Scragg's hat.*

A third pupil appreciated the difference they experienced between learning at school from books and gaining knowledge 'first-hand' through sensory experience:

*Learning by what I heard and saw by myself instead of what someone else had written and having a civil conversation with the role-play characters.*

A substantial number of pupils were certain that they had picked up new skills (71%) and that they had become more interested in the subject as a result of the museum visit (71%). However, only 57% of pupils felt that they would like to visit Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse again. Although we saw earlier that this is comparable to previous RCMG studies, this may be because the museum is located in a rural area and so will be difficult for young people with potentially limited transport options to reach.

Table 5.5.1a summarises all the pupils' responses to the questions on Form B.

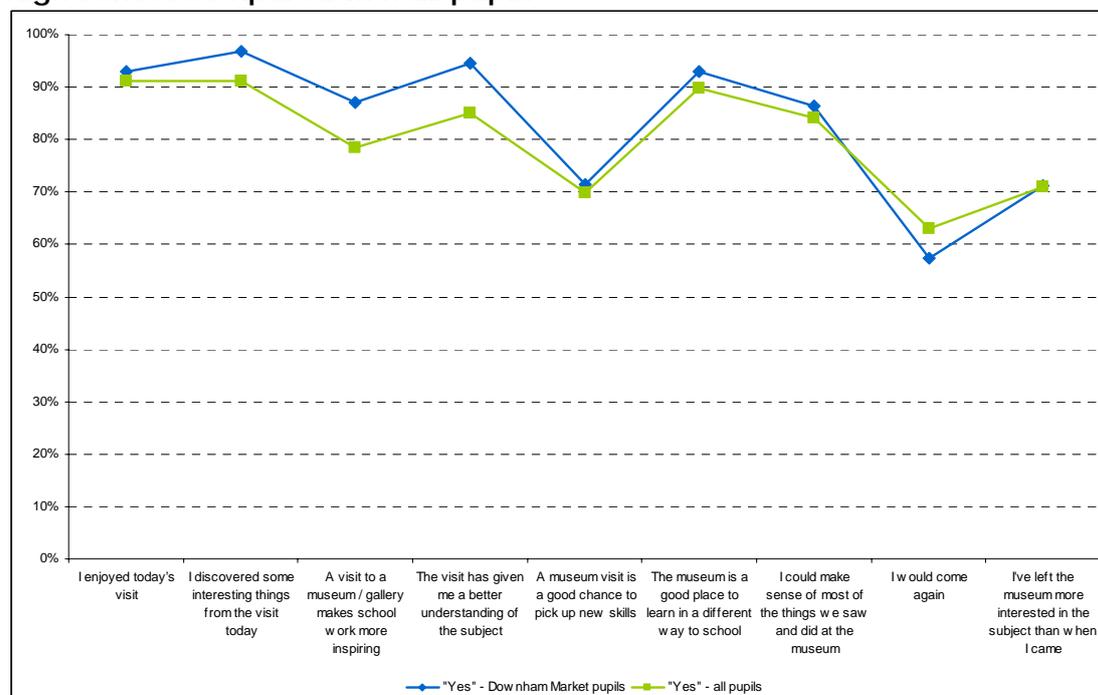
**Table 5.5.1a: Form B, KS3 and above. Pupils' responses to all questions, Downham Market High School**

Downham Market High School KS3, Year 9 Pupils	Yes	No	Don't know
I enjoyed today's visit	93%	1%	6%
I discovered some interesting things from the visit today	97%	2%	2%
A visit to a museum / gallery makes school work more inspiring	87%	4%	9%
The visit has given me a better understanding of the subject	95%	2%	3%
A museum visit is a good chance to pick up new skills	71%	7%	22%
The museum is a good place to learn in a different way to school	93%	3%	4%
I could make sense of most of the things we saw and did at the museum	86%	4%	10%
I would come again	57%	10%	32%
I've left the museum more interested in the subject than when I came	71%	9%	20%

N=256

Fig. 5.5.1a below shows that the 'yes' responses from Downham Market pupils are very close to the overall picture of Form B responses, not surprising as Downham Market represents 58% of the entire questionnaire total.

**Fig. 5.5.1a: Form B, KS3 and above. Pupils' 'yes' responses, Downham Market High School compared with all pupils**



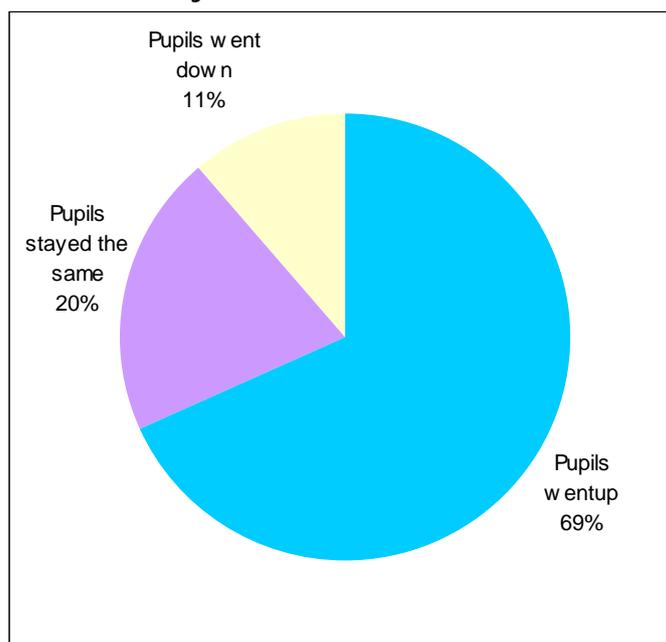
Downham Market, N=256; All pupils, N=451

Following their visit, Downham Market High School provided assignment marks for 287 pupils; these consisted of the mark for the Year 9 Gressenhall-linked assignment, 'Was the workhouse so bad?', and up to three marks for previous history assignments from Year 8. Not all these marks were available for all classes due to teacher absence the previous year, and 12 pupils had not completed the Gressenhall assignment. However there is enough data to be able to estimate the impact of the museum visit on pupil attainment.

Using the previous assignment marks as a guide, each class teacher had made the judgement as to whether they felt that the pupil had progressed in their marks, stayed the same, or fallen. The teacher's judgement was used as a guide when analysing the results.

Fig. 5.5.1b below shows that of the 275 pupils with useable marks, 69% of pupils experienced an increase their marks for the Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse linked assignment; 20% of pupils produced work to the same standard as previous work, and 11% of pupils experienced a decrease in their marks compared to previous assignments.

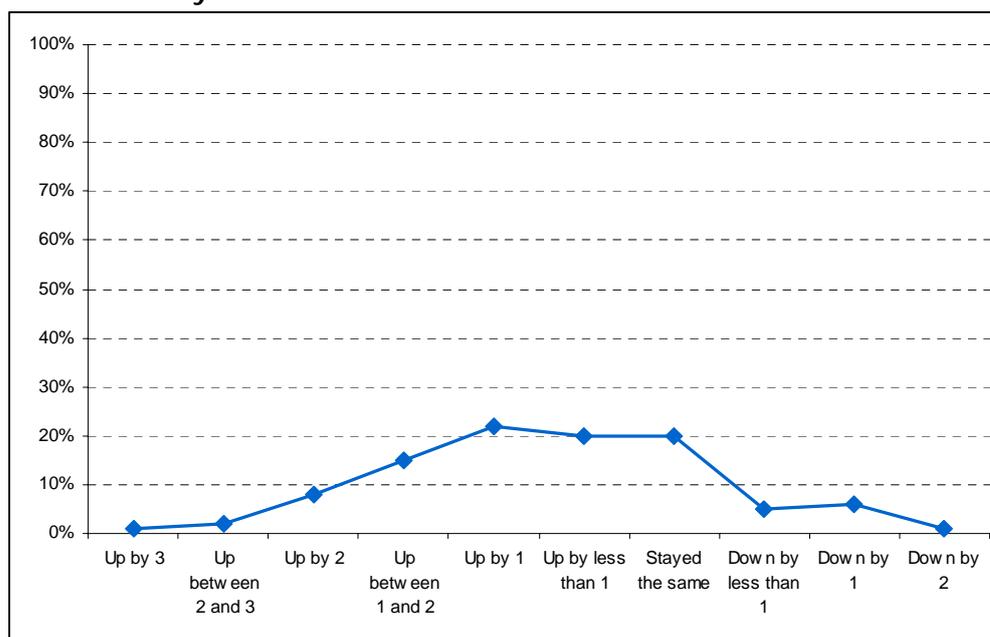
**Fig. 5.5.1b: Assessment marks. Pupils from Downham Market High School, breakdown by increase or decrease**



N=275

Looking at by how much pupils increased or decreased in their marks, 48% of pupils increased their marks by 1 level or more, with 2 pupils going up by as much as 3 levels. A further twenty per cent (20%) of pupils went up by 'less than 1 mark'. Eleven per cent (11%) of pupils experienced a fall in their marks; 5% fell by 'less than 1' level and 6% fell by 1 level. Three pupils experienced a decrease in their marks by 2 levels.

**Fig. 5.5.1c: Assessment marks. Pupils from Downham Market High School, breakdown by rate of increase or decrease**

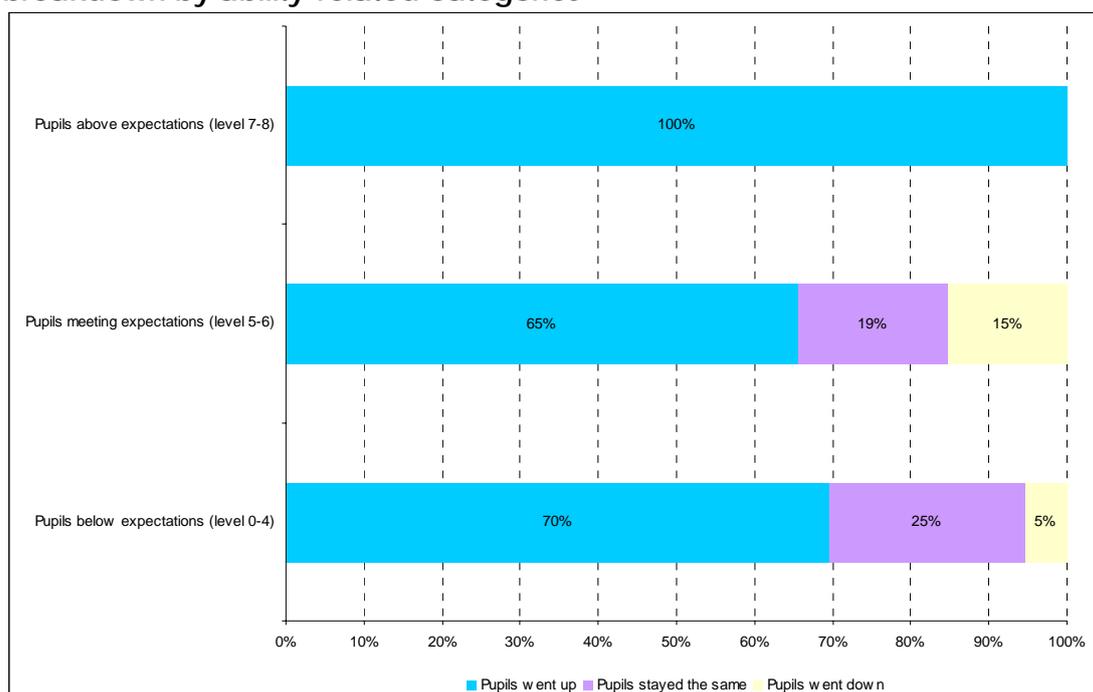


N=275

In terms of gender, the same proportion of boys (129 pupils in total) and girls (146 pupils in total) experienced an increase in their marks (68%), and very similar proportions stayed the same (21% for girls, 20% for boys) and experienced a decrease in their marks (11% for girls and 12% for boys). This finding seems to suggest that the experience at Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse appealed to pupils of both sexes.

Considering pupils in terms of their ability, all 12 'higher' ability pupils showed an increase in their marks (100%), and proportionally slightly more 'lower' ability pupils experienced an increase in their marks (70%) compared to 'average' ability pupils (65%). It suggests that the experience at the museum was beneficial for pupils of all ability, although more 'average' ability students decreased in their marks (15%) than other category of student.

**Fig. 5.5.1d: Assessment marks. Pupils from Downham Market High School, breakdown by ability-related categories**



Pupils above expectations / average, N=12; Pupils meeting expectations / average, N=171; Pupils below expectations / average, N=92

The confidence that pupils showed in their responses to Form B is demonstrated in the high numbers of pupils who appear to have progressed in their work as a result of the museum visit. However why have some pupils fallen in terms of their marks – why have they not benefited from the experience in the same way that their peers have?

### 5.5.2. Neatherd High School (Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse)

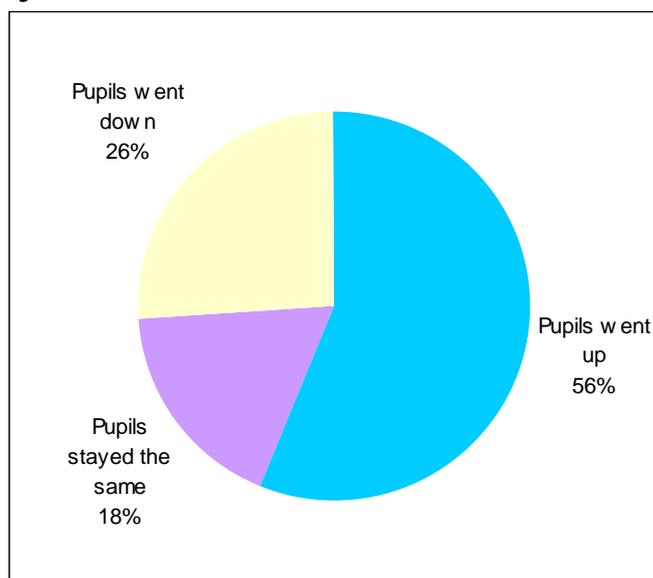
Neatherd High School visited Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse but pupils were not asked to complete Form B. The school provided assessment marks following the Gressenhall visit for 219 pupils; a further 17 pupils for whom marks were provided had not completed the assignment linked to the museum visit.

Like Downham Market High School, Neatherd High School awards marks based on levels very similar to National Curriculum levels, from 5 to 7, which are further subdivided into a, b and c within each level span (c denotes a low level, b middle and a is high). In lieu of previous assignment marks, results were given for the following:

- Key stage 2 levels for English, maths and science
- MIDYIS cognitive test score given in Year 8
- Average level for attainment in geography, Year 8
- Mark for the Gressenhall assignment
- Target level for Year 9

The marks given for each pupils were accompanied by a judgement as to whether it was felt that the pupil had progressed in their marks for the museum-related assignment, achieved the same standard as previous assignments, or fallen, based on a comparison between the average year 8 score and the mark given for the Gressenhall assignment.<sup>23</sup> Fig. 3.5.2a shows that 56% of pupils experienced an increase in their marks for their Gressenhall linked assignment compared to previous marks, 18% of pupils achieved marks that were equal to their Year 8 average score and 26% of pupils indicated a 'failure' to progress and their marks had fallen. Across the nine schools in the study, Neatherd High has the largest proportion of pupils who experienced a fall in their marks for the museum-related assignment or piece of work.

**Fig. 5.5.2a: Assessment marks. Pupils from Neatherd High School, breakdown by increase or decrease in marks**

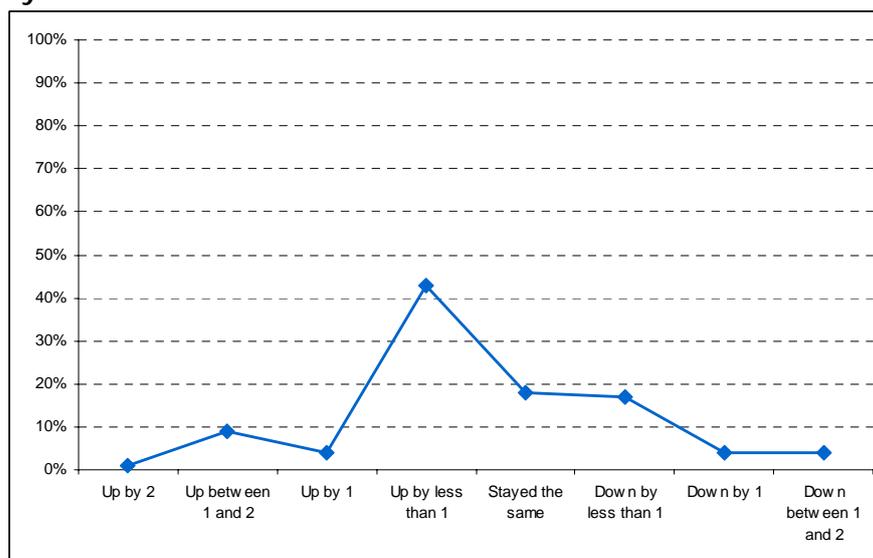


N=219

The largest proportion of pupils (43%) increased their marks by 'less than 1' level for their museum-related assignment. Only 14% of pupils increased their marks by 1 or more levels. Also pupils who fell in their marks tended to drop by 'less than 1' level (17%), a few dropping by 1 level or more (8%).

<sup>23</sup> This method was developed into a system so that all schools could be compared on a similar basis and is described in detail in Section 4: Research methods

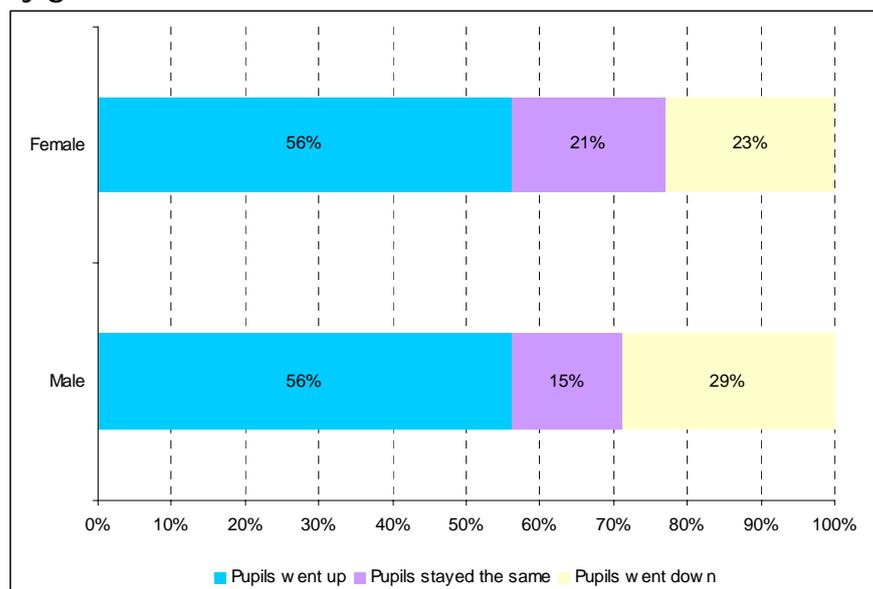
**Fig. 5.5.2b: Assessment marks. Pupils from Neatherd High School, breakdown by rate of increase or decrease in marks**



N=219

Looking at results across gender, as for Downham Market High School the findings for boys and girls are remarkably similar. Exactly the same percentage of male and female pupils increased their marks (56%). Slightly more male pupils however experienced a decrease in their marks (29% for boys compared to 23% for girls).

**Fig. 5.5.2c: Assessment marks. Pupils from Neatherd High School, breakdown by gender**



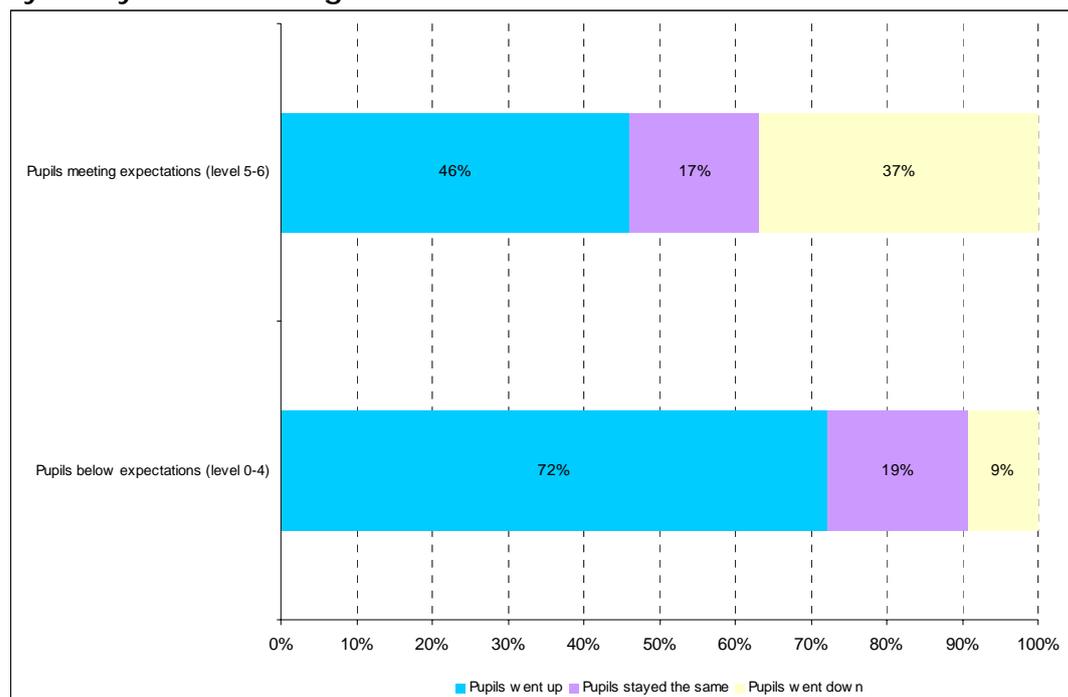
Male, N=114; Female, N=105

Looking at ability, it seems to be that proportionally, more pupils of 'lower ability' progressed in their marks as a result of the museum visit (72%) when compared with pupils of 'average' ability (46%). It is notable that more pupils

categorised as 'average ability', therefore meeting expectations in their work, have experienced a decline in their marks for the Gressenhall-linked assignment (37% compared to 9%).

Pupils of 'higher' ability have been excluded from the graph because there were only three pupils in this category and no pattern was discernable. One of these pupils progressed in their marks, one pupil remained the same and one pupil fell in their marks.

**Fig. 5.5.2d: Assessment marks. Pupils from Neatherd High School, breakdown by ability-related categories**



Pupils meeting expectations / average, N=130; Pupils below expectations / average, N=86

It seems that, based on the marks provided by the school, that the visit to Gressenhall did have a positive impact on the majority of the pupils, although it was not always beneficial. Neatherd High had the highest proportion of pupils who experienced a decrease in their marks for the museum-related assignment out of all the schools in the research study (26%), however it seems that 'lower ability' pupils benefited the most from the experience with 72% of 86 pupils seeing an increase in their assignment marks.

### 5.5.3 Holbrook High School (Suffolk Archives)

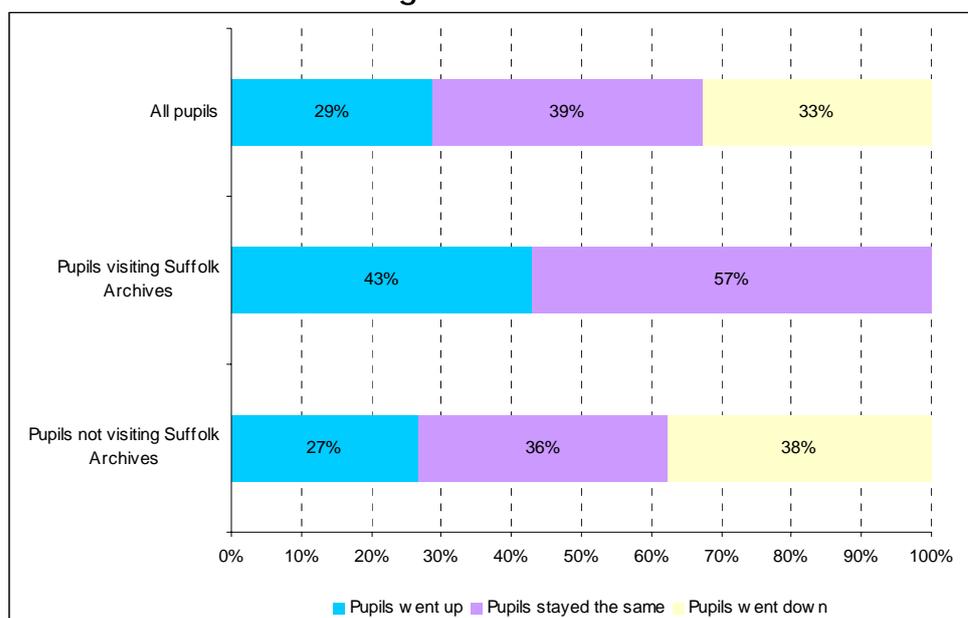
Seven Year 8 pupils from Holbrook High School, drawn from two mixed ability teaching groups in History, were involved in a project with Suffolk Archives to help them with an assignment looking at slavery and the abolition campaign of the eighteenth century (Clarkson / Slavery unit). The assignment was entitled, 'How important was Thomas Clarkson's role in the abolition of the slave trade?' Although it was not felt appropriate to ask pupils to complete a Form B, assessment marks were provided not only for the seven pupils

involved in the project but for all pupils involved in the Clarkson / Slavery unit. This means that some comparisons can be made between pupils who were a part of the archives project and those pupils who were not.

Assessment marks provided by the school consisted of marks for the Thomas Clarkson assignment, and a previous Year 8 history assignment (Dunwich project). These have been given levels similar to those used for the National Curriculum scores. Data provided also included the pupils' KS2 English score and 10+ reading score. The marks had been analysed as to whether the pupils had progressed in their marks, stayed the same, or had fallen.

Looking at results for both groups, overall only 29% of pupils progressed in their marks for this assignment compared to their first assignment (Dunwich project); more pupils either stayed the same (39%) or experienced a fall in their marks (33%). The seven pupils involved with the archives project appear to have performed better than those who did not take part; 43% of pupils involved in the project (3 pupils) saw an increase in their marks and the remaining 57% (4 pupils) produced work to the same standard as previous assignments. In contrast, 38% of pupils who did not take part in the project saw their marks decrease.

**Fig. 5.5.3a: Assessment marks. Pupils from Holbrook High School and the results for their Clarkson assignment**



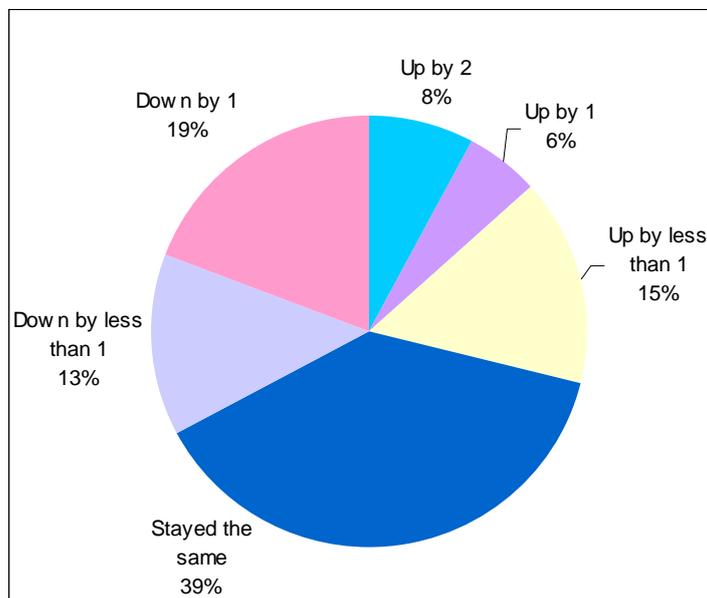
All pupils, N=52; Pupils visiting Suffolk Archives, N=7; Pupils not visiting Suffolk Archives, N=45

Looking at the 'rate' of increase or decrease in their marks, taking all 52 pupils from the two classes together, of the (twelve) pupils that increased their marks, 8% went up by 2 levels, 6% went up by 1 level and 15% went up by 'less than 1' level.

Of the four pupils who increased their marks the most, by 2 levels, two were involved in the Suffolk Archives project. Of the remaining pupils taking part in

the Archives project, one pupil increased their marks by 1 level and the remaining four stayed the same.

**Fig. 5.5.3b: Assessment marks. Pupils from Holbrook High School and the results for their Clarkson assignment, breakdown by rate of increase or decrease**



N=52

Due to the small number of pupils involved in the museum project, and the relatively small number of pupils overall, it was not possible to discern any patterns when looking at the findings across gender and ability.

It appears that the involvement in the archives project for the seven pupils had a significant impact on their ability to complete the assignment. It was a challenging essay for pupils which introduced them to difficult historical concepts of significance and interpretation. Previous assignments had been based on significantly less challenging concepts. In terms of the content, the history of slavery and the abolition movement is a demanding subject in terms of understanding slavery in the eighteenth century context. Involvement in the project seems to have therefore helped the pupils who took part complete the assignment as although less than half of them saw an increase in their marks, none of them experienced a fall in their marks.

#### **5.5.4 City of Norwich School (Sainsbury Centre for the Visual Arts, UEA)**

Eleven A-level pupils from the City of Norwich School who visited the Sainsbury Centre for the visual arts completed a Form B. Their responses are reproduced in Table 5.5.4a below. Percentages have been used but because of the small size of the sample they must be interpreted carefully.

Generally pupils demonstrated a high degree of enthusiasm for their visit.

**Table 5.5.4a: Form B, KS3 and above. Pupils' responses to all questions, City of Norwich School**

City of Norwich School A-level Art Pupils	Yes	No	Don't know
I enjoyed today's visit	100%	0%	0%
I discovered some interesting things from the visit today	82%	0%	18%
A visit to a museum / gallery makes school work more inspiring	91%	9%	0%
The visit has given me a better understanding of the subject	70%	20%	10%
A museum visit is a good chance to pick up new skills	91%	9%	0%
The museum is a good place to learn in a different way to school	91%	9%	0%
I could make sense of most of the things we saw and did at the museum	82%	0%	18%
I would come again	91%	0%	9%
I've left the museum more interested in the subject than when I came	73%	0%	18%

N=11

In terms of assessment marks, for the initial analysis we were given the 'raw' marks by the school as the analysis took place prior to the publishing of the final marks by the exam boards in August. The school also enabled us to have access to the pupils' previous marks from the school's data tracking system. However due to confidentiality reasons it was not possible to identify the students or give the post-project mark and those that were sent were very tentative.

After the marks had been published by the exam board, the school sent the final marks for pupils involved in the project with the Sainsbury Centre. Unfortunately it did not prove possible to link these final marks with the 'raw' marks due to changes in the school tracking system, however the teacher who sent the marks reported in an email of 26 September 2007 that;

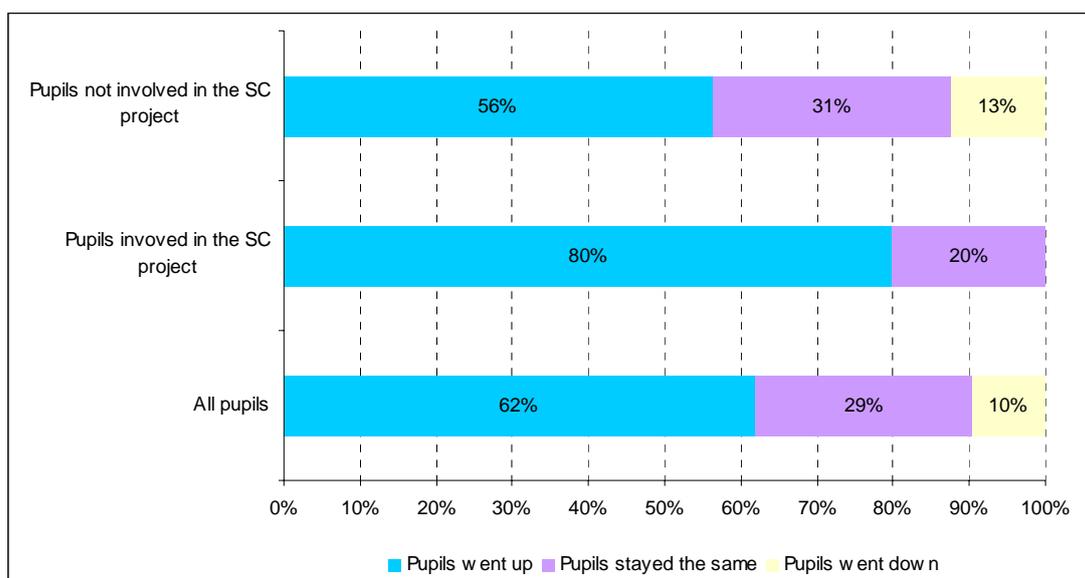
'...overwhelmingly the raw grades of students noted in the portfolio were all confirmed as final grades. Other students involved in some of the workshops all achieved grades as per raw marks with one exception, achieving a D grade against a C predicted/raw. However, he was not one of the main students for focus in the study and did not attend all the workshops, so was really only a partial participant.'

Therefore this report retains the analysis of the assessment marks based on the 'raw' marks sent prior to September. These were given for two sets of coursework, Unit 1 and Unit 3 and both units have been treated separately. In total there were results for thirty-eight pupils, thirteen of those pupils having taken part in the Sainsbury Centre project and who had been identified through the school's tracking system.

For **Unit 1 coursework**, marks were given for twenty-one pupils, five of whom had taken part in the project with the Sainsbury Centre. Using the analysis

given by the school in terms of how far pupils progressed in their grades, 62% of all pupils progressed in their grades. It appears that more pupils who were involved in the project with the Sainsbury Centre went up in their marks (80%, 4 pupils) compared to pupils who did not take part in the project (56%, 9 pupils), but only in terms of proportion. Please note the small sample sizes for each category.

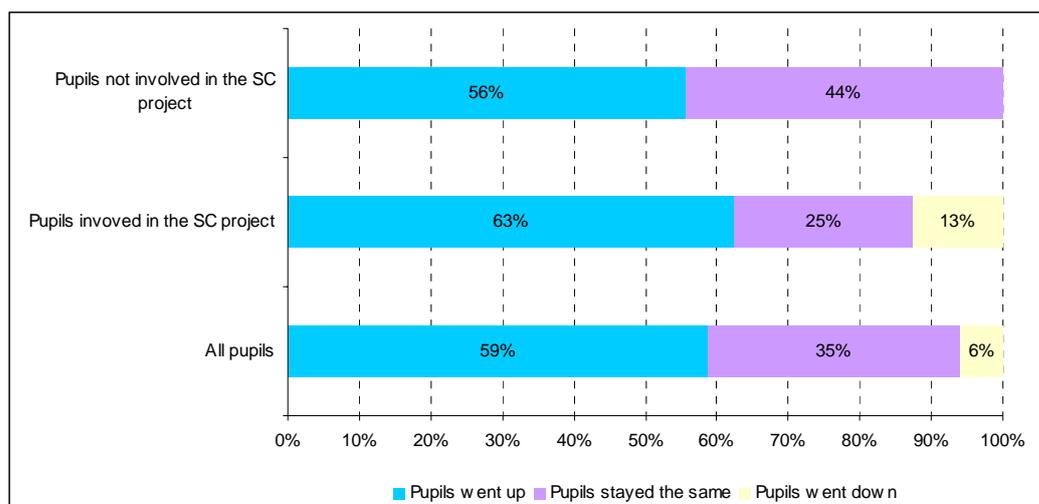
**Fig. 5.5.4a: Assessment marks. City of Norwich School pupils for their Unit 1 coursework**



All pupils, N=21; pupils involved in the SC project, N=5; pupils not involved in the SC project, N=16

For **Unit 3 coursework**, marks were given for seventeen pupils, eight of whom had taken part in the Sainsbury Centre project. Although it appears that proportionally more pupils taking part in the project increased their marks (63%, 5 pupils) than those who did not (56%, 5 pupils), the one pupil who experienced a decline in their marks (reported as 13% in Fig. 5.5.4b) was involved in the project. Please note the small sample sizes for each category.

**Fig. 5.5.4b: Assessment marks. City of Norwich School pupils for their Unit 3 coursework**



All pupils, N=17; pupils involved in the SC project, N=8; pupils not involved in the SC project, N=9

It was not possible to discern any patterns in terms of ability or gender. The evidence therefore from the assessment marks is very ambiguous as to whether the project with the Sainsbury Centre had an impact on the pupil's work and the sample sizes are too small to detect patterns with any certainty.

There is some evidence, however, from the Form Bs and additional evaluation forms sent to RCMG completed by pupils that took part in the project that they felt confident that the experience at the Sainsbury Centre would help them in their A-level work. One male pupil, aged 17, commented that the most interesting thing from the visit for him was:

*Working and thinking differently, a new perspective on things and new ideas gives me a boost of inspiration and lets me work at a higher level.*

Another male pupil could see the direct relevance between the work they did and his schoolwork:

*The demonstrating visual illusions as it ties into my psychology coursework.*

However although the same pupil appreciated working in the galleries he struggled to understand some of the artist's concepts:

*The SCVA setting was important to work in as it was possible to see and be inspired by all the art around you... It was difficult to get much from it as I was not offered the chance to go on the first visit so I don't understand [the sculptor's] work any more than when I started.*

Other pupils commented that they did not understand the artist's explanations for his work, one in particular said:

*It didn't get explained very well, he seemed to have some idea in his head, he couldn't really describe verbally well.*

Other pupils however benefited from the visit as they could make connections with their own artwork:

*When reviewing my work at the visit I was able to see new directions for my work to move forward in. I also found it useful discussing everyone's work with examples in front of them. I would [like] to do a similar workshop again but working with more of our own work.*

*The SCVA is full of Artefacts that I found very useful, from being around the pieces I have gained more knowledge, understanding and awareness of them...*

So although pupils were very positive about the visit in general, there are some tentative indications as to why the impact on their work was, albeit on their raw A-level marks, very ambiguous. Without stronger evidence it is not possible to reach any definite conclusions.

### 5.5.5 The Manor Community College (Fitzwilliam Museum)

Three classes of Year 8 pupils from The Manor Community College in Cambridge visited the Fitzwilliam Museum. Ten pupils completed a Form B after their visit (these are from the class which are used as a case study). The pupils' responses to Form B are reproduced below in Table 5.5.5a. As with all small sample sizes (10 pupils) care must be taken when interpreting these results.

Pupils were very enthusiastic about their visit judging by these very high percentages of agreement, confident that they could understand most things that they did at the museum and that they had obtained a better understanding of the subject.

**Table 5.5.5a: Form B, KS3 and above. Pupils' responses to all questions, The Manor Community College**

<b>The Manor Community College Year 8 pupils</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
I enjoyed today's visit	100%	0%	0%
I discovered some interesting things from the visit today	100%	0%	0%
A visit to a museum / gallery makes school work more inspiring	70%	0%	30%
The visit has given me a better understanding of the subject	100%	0%	0%
A museum visit is a good chance to pick up new skills	90%	0%	10%
The museum is a good place to learn in a different way to school	80%	0%	20%
I could make sense of most of the things we saw and did at the museum	100%	0%	0%

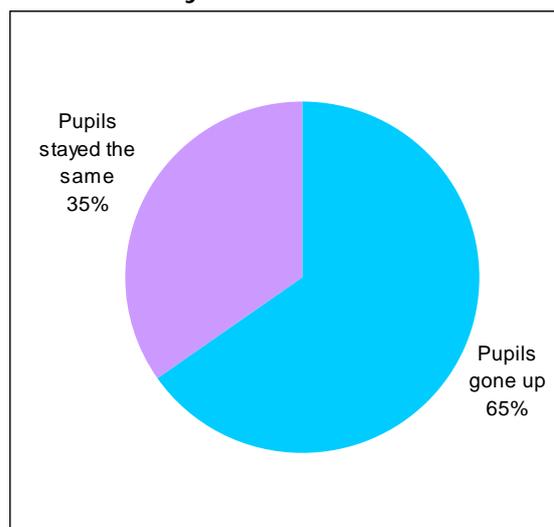
I would come again	70%	0%	30%
I've left the museum more interested in the subject than when I came	90%	0%	10%

N=10

Assessment marks were provided by the school for the three English classes who visited the Fitzwilliam Museum, two 'mixed' ability classes and one 'lower ability' class who acted as the subject for the case study. Marks came from forty-nine pupils in total (two further pupils did not complete the assignment). For each class, two previous assignment marks were given along with the marks for the assignment completed after the visit to the Fitzwilliam Museum against which progression could be measured. Levels from 2-6 are used by teachers at the College, with a, b and c used as sub-divisions to grade pupils within these levels.

Taking the data for all three classes together, the majority of pupils (65%) increased their marks in the stories written after the visit to the Fitzwilliam. None of the pupils experienced a fall in their marks which is a remarkable achievement.

**Fig. 5.5.5a: Assessment marks. Pupils from The Manor Community College, breakdown by increase or decrease in marks**

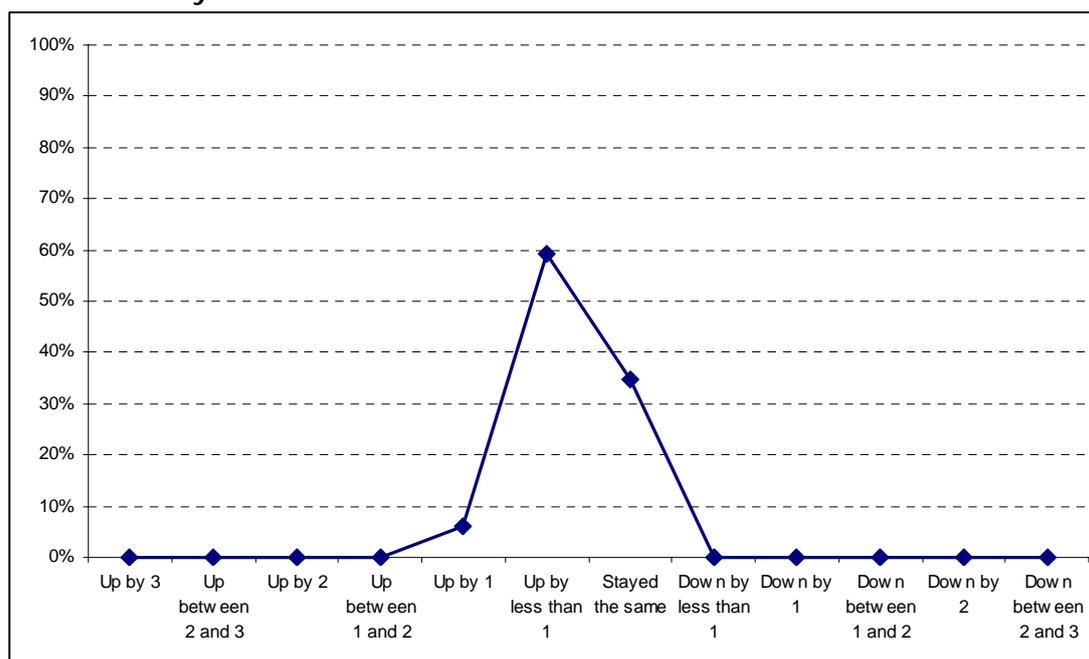


N=49

For the ten 'lower ability' pupils who are the subjects of the case study, 6 pupils went up in their marks in the Fitzwilliam Museum-linked assignment and the remaining 4 pupils produced work to the same standard as previous assignments.

In terms of by how much the pupils progressed, most pupils (59%) increased their marks by 'less than 1' level; smaller numbers of pupils increased by one level (6%). In the case study class all pupils who increased their marks went up by 'less than 1.'

**Fig. 5.5.5b: Assessment marks. Pupils from The Manor Community College, breakdown by rate of increase or decrease in marks**

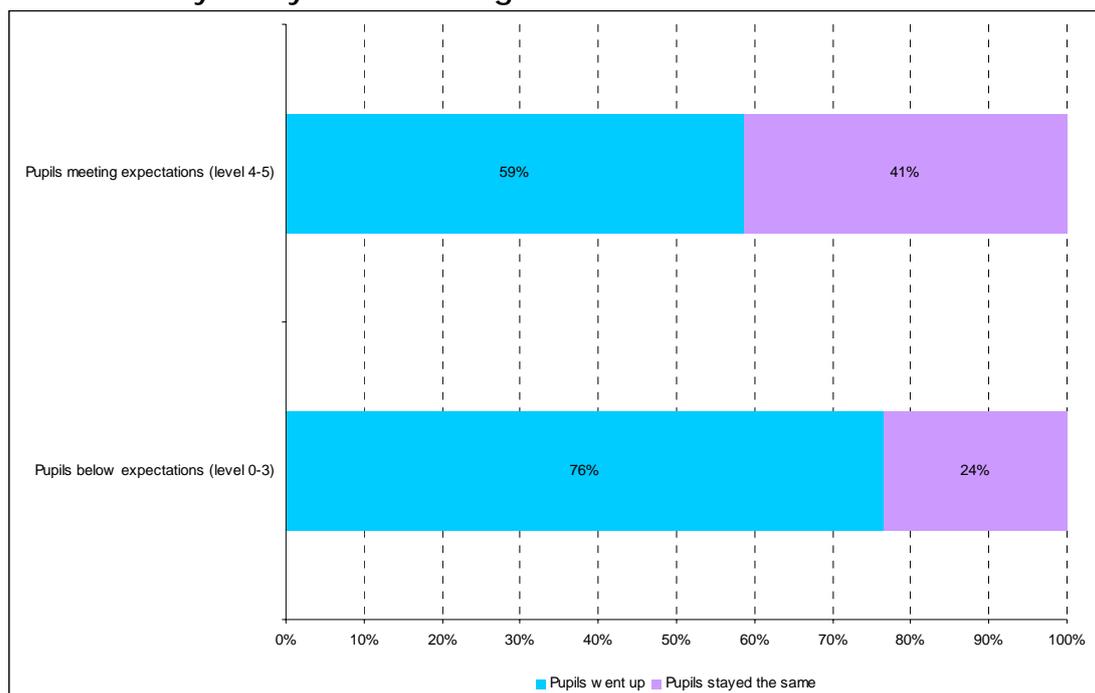


N=49

It was not possible to analyse the marks from the Manor Community College across gender as this detail was not supplied for all of the classes. In terms of ability, using National Curriculum levels as a guide it was felt that levels 2-3 denoted Year 8 pupils who are achieving 'below expectations' (lower ability), levels 4-5 denoted pupils working to the level expected (average ability) and pupils at level 6 working 'above expectations' (higher ability).

Fig. 5.5.5c shows that proportionally, it appears that more 'lower ability' pupils experienced an increase in their marks for the Fitzwilliam Museum-linked assignment when compared to the proportion of pupils of 'average ability' (76% compared to 59%) although note must be made of the differing sample sizes. The three pupils of higher ability have not been included in the analysis here; two pupils went up in their marks and one pupil stayed the same.

**Fig. 5.5.5c: Assessment marks. Pupils from The Manor Community College, breakdown by ability-related categories**



Pupils meeting expectations / average, N=29; Pupils below expectations / average, N=17 (3 pupils excluded)

At the Manor Community School, overwhelmingly all pupils benefited from the museum visit and no pupils experienced a fall in their marks for their museum-based assignment. 'Lower ability' pupils appeared to benefit most from the visit to the Fitzwilliam, all of them going up or staying the same in their marks, and their (increased?) confidence in their learning also appears to be reflected in the enthusiastic responses to Form B completed after the museum visit.

### 5.5.6 Fakenham High School (Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse)

After their visit to Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse, 145 pupils from Fakenham High School completed a Form B. Looking at their responses shows that pupils were confident of having discovered something interesting from the visit (80%) and most pupils agreed that the museum was a good place to learn in a different way to school (83%).

However compared to other schools, a slightly smaller proportion of pupils felt that the visit made their school work more inspiring (59%) or that they had picked up new skills at the museum (61%).

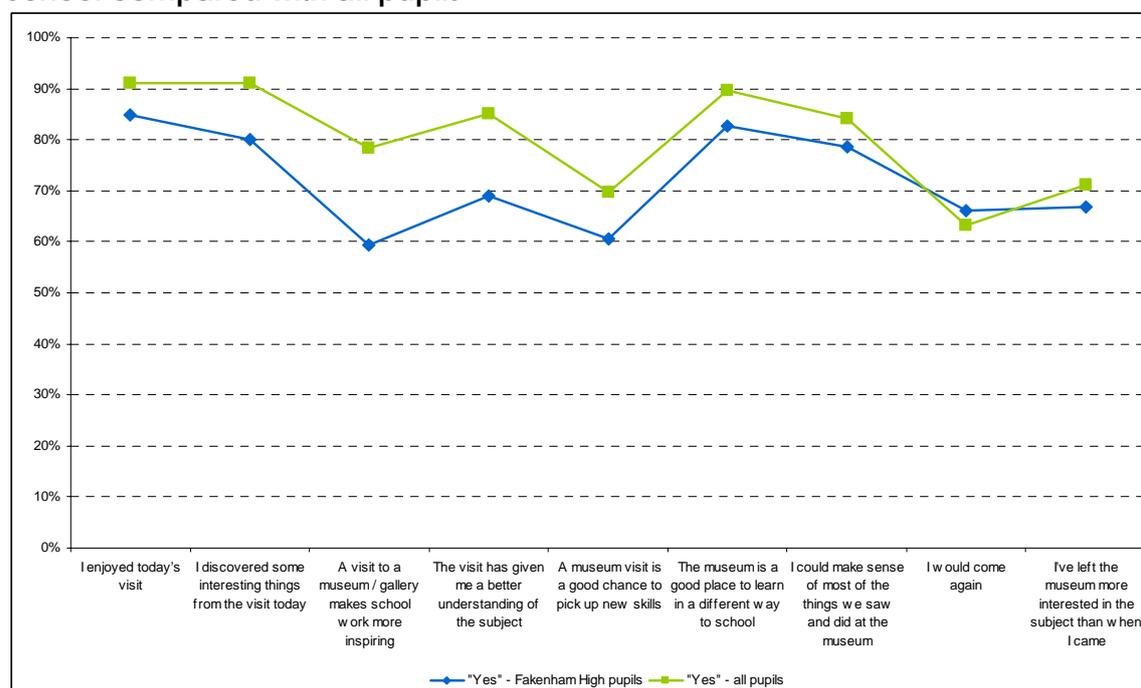
Table 5.5.6a summarises their responses to Form B and Fig. 5.5.6a below compares the responses from Fakenham High School with all the schools in the research study.

**Table 5.5.6a: Form B, KS3 and above. Pupils' responses to all questions, Fakenham High School**

<b>Fakenham High School Year 7 pupils</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
I enjoyed today's visit	85%	6%	9%
I discovered some interesting things from the visit today	80%	10%	10%
A visit to a museum / gallery makes school work more inspiring	59%	21%	19%
The visit has given me a better understanding of the subject	69%	14%	17%
A museum visit is a good chance to pick up new skills	61%	15%	24%
The museum is a good place to learn in a different way to school	83%	8%	9%
I could make sense of most of the things we saw and did at the museum	79%	9%	12%
I would come again	66%	10%	23%
I've left the museum more interested in the subject than when I came	67%	13%	20%

N=145

**Fig. 5.5.6a: Form B, KS3 and above. Pupils' 'yes' responses, Fakenham High School compared with all pupils**



Fakenham High, N=145; All pupils, N=451

In their responses to the open question, 'The most interesting thing about today was...' pupils were generally enthusiastic about the visit. They tended to talk about their growing appreciation for wildlife as a result of the visit or

their enjoyment of being able to listen to the points of view of the actors across the day. Typical of the comments are from these two pupils:

*Learning that animals do matter and learning how difficult it is to make a final decision.*

*Talking to all the pretend characters and joining in the discussions. I found it more fun to do it this way than doing it in the classroom. Also I liked seeing all the animals.*

A significant number of pupils talked about their enjoyment of the physical activities such as touring the farm and dissecting the owl pellet:

*When we went round the farm and we had a look at the animals and the land.*

*Being outside and looking at different habitats and environments. I enjoyed seeing all the wildlife and animals and how they live. The tours were good as well.*

*The owl pellets - I didn't know that they wrapped it up in fur and there were that many bones in them.*

The physical and immersive aspect of the activities seems to have appealed to these pupils in a similar way that the history-based session at the workhouse appealed to the pupils of Downham Market High School, although they did not appear to be quite so aware of the impact of the visit on their assignment.

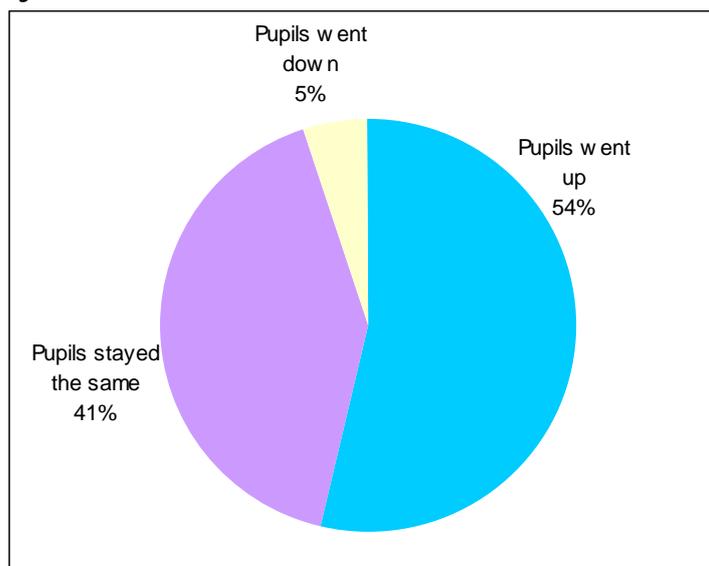
In terms of assessment marks, the school provided marks for 138 pupils in total, with another 12 pupils who did not complete the assignment after the visit to Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse. Along with the marks given for the Gressenhall-linked assignment, two marks for previous Geography assignments were given along with the KS2 English SATs score.<sup>24</sup> The marks given were similar to National Curriculum levels, ranging from levels 3-6. The school also used a + and – system within these levels (which were counted as an increase of less than 1).

Fig. 5.5.6b shows that just over half the pupils from Fakenham High School experienced an increase in their marks for the Gressenhall-related assignment compared to their previous marks (54%). The remaining 41% of pupils did not show any increase and 5% pupils experienced a decline in their assignment marks after the visit.

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<sup>24</sup> During the case study visit the geography teacher noted that the English SATs score tended to be unrepresentative of the levels that the pupils achieved in Geography. Therefore this measure was used only where there was some uncertainty over whether the pupil had progressed in terms of their marks based on the three Geography assignments

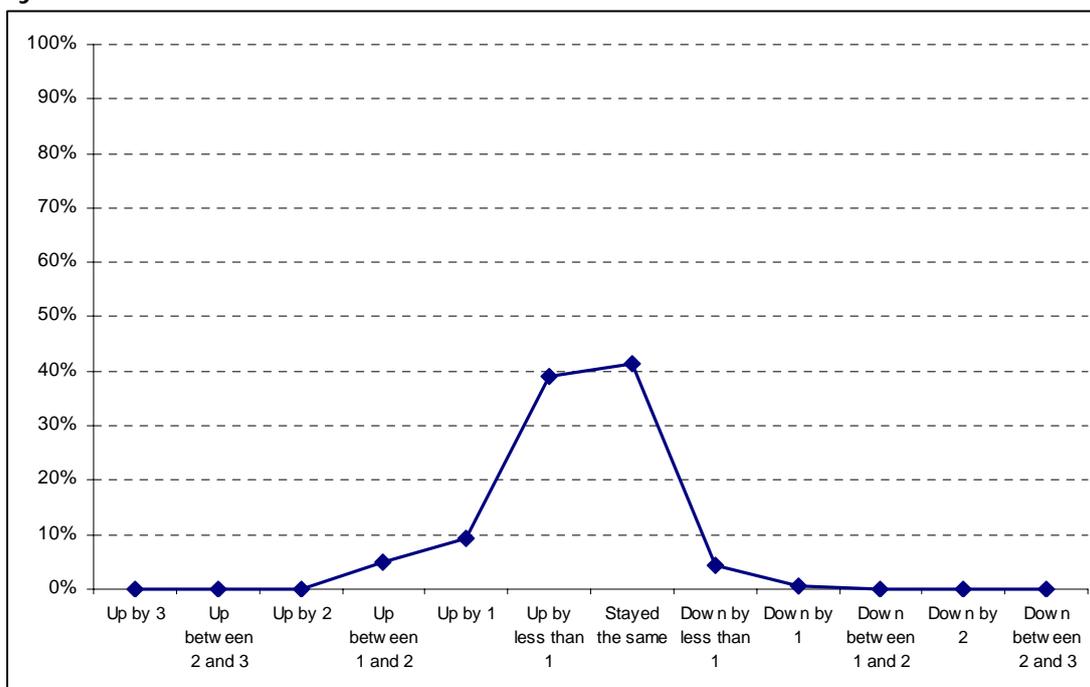
**Fig. 5.5.6b: Assessment marks. Pupils from Fakenham High School, breakdown by increase or decrease in marks**



N=138

Looking at how much the marks went up by, 39% of pupils saw their marks increase by 'less than 1' level and the remaining 14% of pupils saw their marks increase by 1 or 'between 1 and 2' levels. Those pupils who fell in their marks tended to fall by 'less than 1' level (Fig. 5.5.6c below).

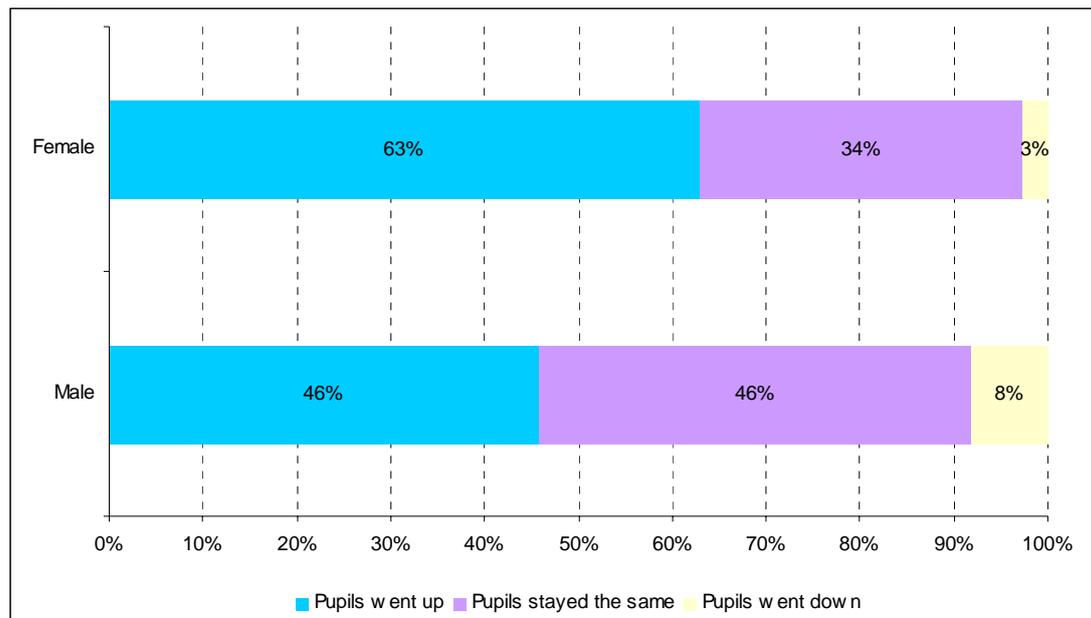
**Fig. 5.5.6c: Assessment marks. Pupils from Fakenham High School, breakdown by rate of increase or decrease in marks**



N=138

With a large enough sample size to compare increase in marks across gender; it appears that proportionally female pupils were more likely to increase their marks (63%) than the male pupils (46%). This is quite different to other schools in the study where there was little perceived difference between boys and girls.

**Fig. 5.5.6d: Assessment marks. Pupils from Fakenham High School, breakdown by gender**

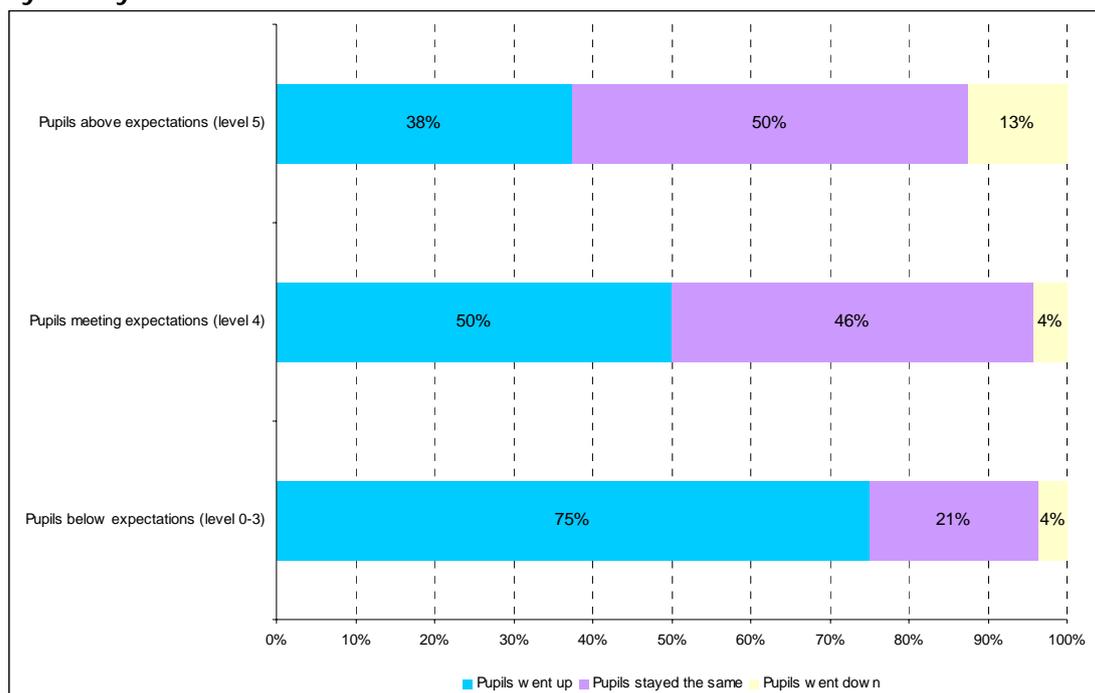


Female, N=73; Male, N=61

Following the system worked out for previous schools, it was assumed that the levels used by teachers to mark assignments correspond to National Curriculum levels.<sup>25</sup> It can be seen in Fig. 5.5.6e below that as with most of the schools in this study, it appears that 'lower' ability pupils were proportionally more likely to experience an increase in their marks as a result of the museum visit, 75% compared to 50% of 'average' ability pupils and 38% of 'higher' ability pupils.

<sup>25</sup> See Section 2: Research Methods for details of how the categories were worked out

**Fig. 5.5.6e: Assessment marks. Pupils from Fakenham High School, breakdown by ability**



Pupils above expectations / average, N=16; Pupils meeting expectations / average, N=94; Pupils below expectations / average, N=28

To conclude, the majority of pupils from Fakenham High School showed an increase in their marks for their museum-based assignment (54%) and for a large group of pupils, relatively few pupils experienced a fall in their marks (5% of pupils compared to 26% for Neatherd High School and 11% for Downham Market High School). It appears that girls and 'lower' ability pupils were also more likely to achieve increased marks in the museum-related assignment.

### 5.5.7 Rosemary Musker High School (Sainsbury Centre for the Visual Arts)

Twenty-two pupils from Rosemary Musker High School completed a Form B after their visit to the Sainsbury Centre. Taking note of the small sample size, we can see that all the pupils enjoyed their visit. It is a very positive picture (see Table 5.5.7a below).

**Table 5.5.7a: Form B, KS3 and above. Pupils' responses to all questions, Rosemary Musker High School**

Rosemary Musker High School GCSE pupils	Yes	No	Don't know
I enjoyed today's visit	100%	0%	0%
I discovered some interesting things from the visit today	95%	0%	5%
A visit to a museum / gallery makes school work more inspiring	95%	0%	5%
The visit has given me a better understanding of the subject	82%	0%	18%
A museum visit is a good chance to pick up new skills	91%	5%	5%
The museum is a good place to learn in a different way to school	100%	0%	0%
I could make sense of most of the things we saw and did at the museum	86%	5%	9%
I would come again	86%	0%	14%
I've left the museum more interested in the subject than when I came	86%	5%	9%

N=22

Pupils felt inspired by the visit (95% found it made their school work more inspiring) and this is reflected in some of their comments from Form B:

*Inspiration from so many different artists from all over the world, who I never thought I would take interest in.*

*That is your imagination that helps you to create your own art work and sometimes it counts more when you use your own imagination than somebody else's. But it is good to get influence from other artists and drawings. I found the visit to this museum very interesting because I found out new things.*

Other pupils valued the freedom that they were given to devise their own artwork:

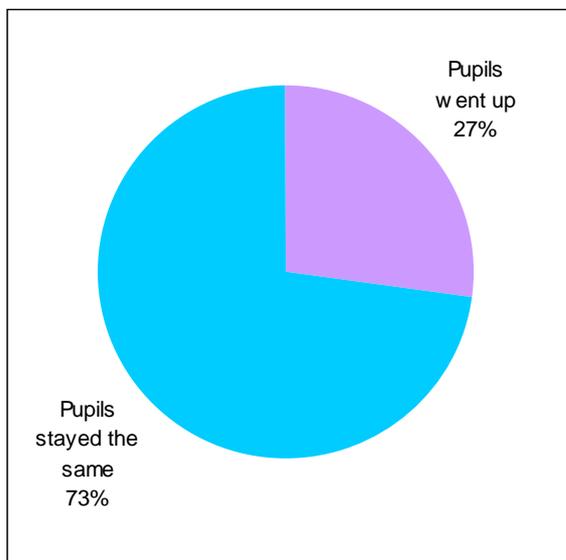
*That I could do what ever I wanted and there was so many materials to use.*

*Using all the different materials that I haven't had the chance to before and being completely in control of what I was doing on my art.*

In terms of assessment marks, for the twenty-two pupils involved in the project at the Sainsbury Centre the school were able to provide the final grade for the work on 'Personal identity' completed with the Sainsbury Centre and two previous grades. Within these grades teachers use the sub-levels + and - which are also taken into account when analysing the assessment marks (counted as an increase or decline of 'less than 1').

Looking at those pupils who were involved in the project with the Sainsbury Centre, in terms of their grades the majority pupils produced work to the same standard as their previous work (73%) and the remaining 27% of pupils increased in their grade for the museum-related assignment.<sup>26</sup>

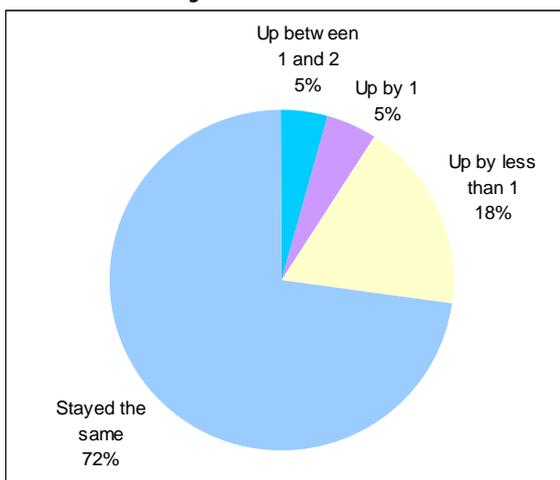
**Fig. 5.5.7a: Assessment marks. Pupils from Rosemary Musker High School, breakdown by increase or decrease in marks**



N=22

Remembering that this is a small sample, most pupils who did increase their grades went up by 'less than 1 grade' (18%) and two pupils (10%) increased their grades by 1 level or more.

**Fig. 5.5.7b: Assessment marks. Pupils from Rosemary Musker High School, breakdown by rate of increase or decrease in marks**



N=22

<sup>26</sup> For some pupils their marks fluctuated quite significantly between the three grades and so an average was worked out in such cases

With such a small sample it was not felt possible to discern any patterns in attainment according to gender or ability.<sup>27</sup>

To conclude, it seems to be that enthusiasm and confidence of pupils in response to a museum visit is not always translated into an increase in formal and measured attainment as such. However there are other reasons for this which are illuminated by the case study.

### 5.5.8 Hampton College (Peterborough Museum)

Six pupils visited Peterborough Museum and completed a Form B. As with other small groups any conclusions drawn can only be very tentative.

Most pupils responded to Form B positively suggesting that they enjoyed their visit and got a lot from it (Table 5.5.8a).

**Table 5.5.8a: Form B, KS3 and above. Pupils' responses to all questions, Hampton College**

Hampton College Year 7 pupils	Yes	No	Don't know
I enjoyed today's visit	100%	0%	0%
I discovered some interesting things from the visit today	100%	0%	0%
A visit to a museum / gallery makes school work more inspiring	100%	0%	0%
The visit has given me a better understanding of the subject	83%	0%	17%
A museum visit is a good chance to pick up new skills	67%	0%	33%
The museum is a good place to learn in a different way to school	100%	0%	0%
I could make sense of most of the things we saw and did at the museum	100%	0%	0%
I would come again	83%	0%	17%
I've left the museum more interested in the subject than when I came	67%	0%	33%

N=22

The sense of enthusiasm was also conveyed in the responses to the open question on Form B, 'The most interesting thing about today was...'

*Investigating different time periods. The objects really interested me and I now have a better idea of time periods. I also really like performing my presentation on Norman cross and the playing cards.*

*Everything, I really enjoyed it here I'm going to get my dad to see if we come here again. I've learnt so many new things this is the best day of scholl [sic]*

<sup>27</sup> For instance, in the two groups visiting the Sainsbury Centre there were only 2 males out of 22 pupils

*Looking at the bones from the stone age murder mystery: I found it amazing that the bones were so old. I also enjoyed learning about the ice-skate because I do ice-skating as a hobby so I was interested to know what they used to look like and how they used to make them and what materials they used. I also enjoyed finding out where they used to ice skate.*

Alongside the Form B completed by these pupils, Peterborough Museum also sent a further twenty-two copies of alternative evaluation forms completed by pupils after their visit to the museum. This questionnaire asked the pupils the following (open) questions:

- What did you enjoy about the activities?
- What did you learn from the activities? (Please focus on skills)
- How could the activities be improved?
- Did these activities help to improve your understanding of History?
- Did these activities make you more likely to visit Peterborough Museum with the school?
- Did these activities make you more likely to visit Peterborough Museum at the weekend?
- Did you find anything surprising or amazing?
- Did anything change your mind about anything?

Of interest from these questionnaires is that quite a few pupils commented that they had learnt how to use sources more clearly and felt more confident to judge them as evidence from the past:

*I learnt more on how to look deeper into evidence and how to [look] at sources and see if we could trust them and how to see if the author was an expert.*

*I learnt how to compare peices [sic] of evidence and how to find out differences between them.*

Another pupil felt that the session at the museum had helped to improve their decision-making ability:

*I learnt how to express an opinion as a class. I learnt how to compare evidence and conclude my ideas.*

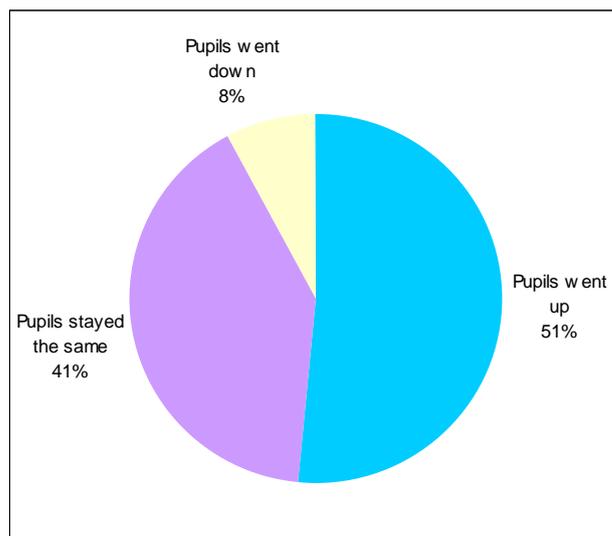
The pupils also indicated that they learnt about chronology and looked at many objects from the Stone Age, finding out how they were used and what they were made of.

The project that the pupils took part in saw them working with a museums loans box in class then visiting Peterborough Museum after the classroom work to practice the skills learnt. In terms of assessment marks, the school provided marks for the 'Stone Age Mystery' assignment that the teacher noted was completed after the pupils had used the loans box but prior to the museum visit. Marks for two previous assignments were given (Hastings and Castle Sources Investigation) and a baseline assessment score; these were given in

levels similar to those used in the National Curriculum. The school also used a, b and c as sub-divisions within these levels. Assignment marks were given for thirty-nine pupils.

Looking at the analysis for the marks gained by pupils for the 'Stone Age Murder Mystery' assignment it appears that working with the museum resources in the classroom has corresponded with the majority of pupils increasing their marks compared to previous assignments (51%).

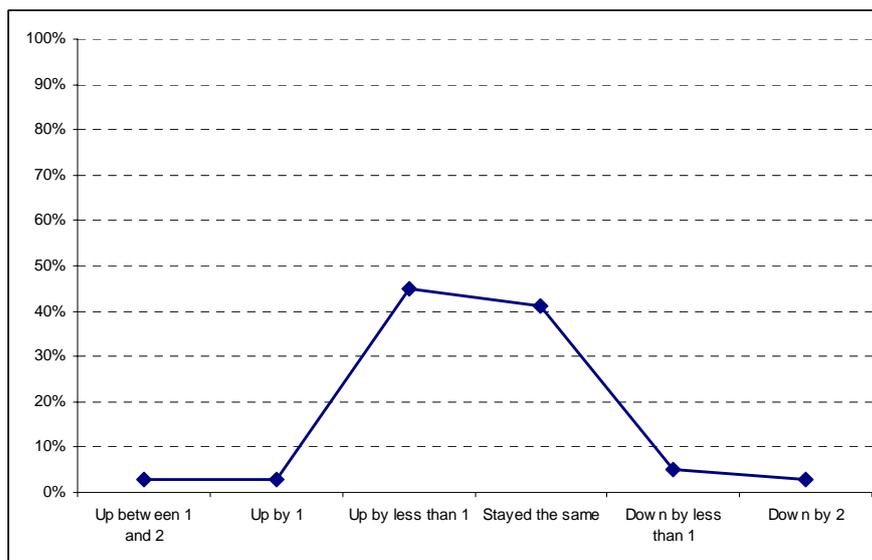
**Fig. 5.5.8a: Assessment marks. Pupils from Hampton College, breakdown by increase or decrease in marks**



N=39

In terms of how far pupils progressed in their museum-related assignment, the largest proportion of pupils went up by 'less than 1' level (45%), followed by the 41% of pupils who achieved the same score as for previous assignments.

**Fig. 5.5.8b: Assessment marks. Pupils from Hampton College, breakdown by rate of increase or decrease in marks**



N=39

Repeating a pattern seen elsewhere, it was 'lower ability' pupils (level 3 or below) who appeared to benefit most from the project, with none of the five 'lower' ability pupils experiencing a drop in their marks, unlike the 'average' or 'higher' ability pupils (although it must be said that only three pupils experienced a fall in marks from this sample in total).

Looking at results across gender, the sample is too small to make any meaningful claims from the data but the boys proportionally were slightly more likely to experience an increase in their marks (52% of 21 male pupils compared to 50% of 18 female pupils).

Overall it appears that there may have been some impact from the museum project on the grades of the pupils; however as the assessment marks were given for the classroom work only it may be that future assignments will reveal any longer term benefits of the historical skills that the pupils felt that they had learnt during their visit to Peterborough Museum.

#### **5.8.9. Stradbroke Business and Enterprise College (Moyses Hall)**

Unfortunately Stradbroke Business and Enterprise College were not able to send completed Form B or assessment marks that could be used to compare the pupils' progression in time for the research study.

### **5.9 Conclusion – the limits of quantitative data**

Taking the schools separately shows that the overall findings from the quantitative data are masking quite different evidence from each of the eight schools who provided data for the research study. Although it is possible to make suggestions as to how the museum visit had an impact on the pupils' assignment marks, relatively small sample sizes for some schools hamper the degree of certainty to which meaningful conclusions can be drawn.

## SECTION 6: CASE STUDIES

6.1	<i>Was the workhouse so bad?</i>	156
6.2	<i>Houses, habitats and homelessness</i>	173
6.3	<i>Extraordinary people and things</i>	189
6.4	<i>Wordscapes</i>	205

### CASE STUDY 1: *Was the workhouse so bad?*

6.1	<i>Was the workhouse so bad?</i>	155
	<b>Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse and Downham Market High School</b>	
6.1.1	<b>Overview</b>	155
6.1.2	<b>Research process</b>	157
6.1.3	<b>Context and background</b>	157
	• Downham Market	157
	• Downham Market High School	157
	• Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse	158
6.1.4	<b>Key findings</b>	159
	• The relationship between the museum and the school matters	159
	• It is important for teachers undertaking visits to schools to have support from within their institutions	159
	• Head Teacher, Downham Market High School	159
	• The school valued the visit as much for its impact on pupils' learning and experiences as for its link with improved attainment levels in an assessed piece of work	160
	• Pupils were motivated by their emotional engagement	161
	• Increased expectations/ improved confidence	162
	• A The importance of the sense of place	163
	• The outcomes for the pupils in terms of their learning using the Generic Learning Outcomes	164
	• Assessment marks	169
6.1.5	<b>Conclusions</b>	171

## CASE STUDY 1: *Was the workhouse so bad?*

### 6.1 *Was the workhouse so bad?*

#### Gressenhall Museum and Downham Market High School



##### 6.1.1 Overview

'*Was the Workhouse so Bad?*' at Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse, Norfolk, involved the use of 'Theatre in Education' facilitators taking on the roles of characters, focusing on the topic of a nineteenth century workhouse and poor laws, an element of the KS3 history curriculum. Pupils from Downham Market High School had to note down the good and bad points of the workhouse so they could use these notes for an assignment back in school on '*Was the workhouse so bad?*' They met four characters who presented the case for and against the workhouse: the workhouse master, the workhouse school teacher, a 'jacket woman' (mother of an illegitimate child) and a tramp. The workhouse master and the school teacher presented the case for the workhouse, arguing that the quality of care and education the inmates received was superior to that they would have access to outside the institution. The tramp and the jacket woman highlighted the inhumanity of a system with compulsory labour, separation of the sexes and a fiercely judgemental attitude to anyone who failed to live up to society's moral codes. The session took place in the former workhouse, now a museum, and made use of original locations so the pupils had some idea of the physical layout and spaces within the workhouse.

The aims of the session were to encourage pupils to consider the evidence they had looked at in the class room along with that presented by the museum so they could form a balanced judgement on the role of the workhouse in Victorian England. The session was a well tried and tested one and had been used by the museum successfully over several years. The case study school, Downham Market High School, had visited the museum the previous year and, as a result of feedback in 2005, the 'jacket woman' had been introduced as a main character who led one of the sessions, and the role of the school master had been strengthened. In all other respects the session was the same as in previous years. Two teachers interviewed after the session in 2006 were of the opinion that the school master's role was better than the previous year, but that the jacket woman had taken too high a profile and pupils (in particular the 'weaker' ones) had focused too much on the treatment of unmarried women rather than on the whole workhouse experience.<sup>1</sup> They also felt that the session in 2006 had missed out one or two important elements experienced in 2005. For example, in 2005 the pupils had visited the exercise yard of the workhouse to see and touch the names and dates scratched into the wall. In 2006 they had not done this. This touching of the wall was described by the teacher as 'quite powerful' and gave the pupils a 'sense of period, a sense of time...' However, despite these comments the teachers thought the session was excellent and indicated that feedback was welcomed by the museum which would adapt future sessions to take account of these comments. This 2006 session had been adapted to meet the specific requirements of the school and a teacher who had not been previously had been offered an afternoon at the museum as well as handout materials. However, the pre-visit did not take place.



Downham Market High School's previous visit to Gressenhall museum had been studied by RCMG in 2005 (RR2) and this visit produced some evidence to suggest that pupils achieved a higher mark as a result of their assignment because of the museum visit. In 2006 a repeat visit with a similar (though not

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with the History Teacher/Group Organiser and Head of Sixth Form who accompanied the visit at Downham High School on 8 December 2006

exactly identical) session allowed a direct comparison between the results in the previous year.

As part of this case study the researcher who had observed the museum visit in 2005 re-visited the school in November 2006 to interview a selection of pupils and teachers.

### **6.1.2 Research process**

The account of this case study is based on interviews conducted by Jocelyn Dodd on 8 December 2006 following a visit by the school to the museum on 15 November 2006 and upon the evaluation forms filled in by all pupils before they left the museum. A selection of pupils who took part in the visit, two teachers who accompanied the pupils, the Key Stage 3 coordinator for History who organised the visit and who was involved in the establishment of the programme, and the Head of Sixth Form who accompanied the pupils on a visit, and the Head Teacher (who did not visit the museum) were interviewed. The session at the museum had been observed in 2005 was not attended by the researcher on this occasion due to the limited scale of this research, as it remained essentially the same session with minor differences. The teachers were asked to explain similarities and differences between the two sessions, their impressions of the visit, to assess its value to the pupils and to consider how it might affect attainment levels of their pupils. Pupils were asked about the visit and their impressions of it and if it helped their understanding of the topic being studied. They were also asked about their assessed pieces of work.

The head teacher was interviewed to see how the museum visit was viewed strategically and what value he placed on the assessed work.

The school provided RCMG with the marks for the assessed pieces of work from the museum visit and two previous marks (three in the case of two classes) for comparison.

### **6.1.3 Context and background**

- **Downham Market**

Downham Market is a market town with a population of 6,730 (2001 census). Located in the north-east of Norfolk, it is 12 miles south of King's Lynn about 40 miles west of Norwich. It lies on the River Ouse, on the edge of the fens, serving the large rural surrounding area. Downham Market railway station, which serves the town, is located on the Fen Line from London to King's Lynn and this has led to the recent housing developments in the town. Downham Market is served by one secondary school Downham Market High School.

- **Downham Market High School**

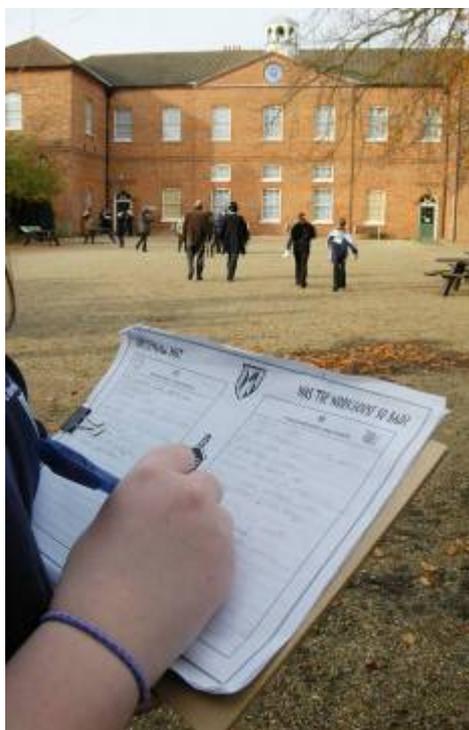
Downham Market High School is a mixed comprehensive school for 11–18 year olds with approximately 1,500 pupils on roll. It is a Specialist Technology College with Investors in People status. The latest Ofsted Report (2004) noted

that the school is about average nationally in terms of the socio-economic profile of pupils and in terms of attainment on entry to the school. However, once in the school, pupils tend to achieve standards that are above average. The report observed that students have 'good attitudes and a desire to learn.'<sup>2</sup> The school serves a large rural catchment area.

- **Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse**

Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse (re-branded in 2007 and formerly Roots of Norfolk or Norfolk Rural Life Museum) is situated outside Dereham in mid Norfolk. It occupies 50 acres and the site includes the old workhouse which has now been converted into a museum of Norfolk rural life and also tells the workhouse story. It contains a small farm and environmental area where traditional farming practices are demonstrated. It is part of the county museums service (Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service) and has received capital grants from Heritage Lottery Fund and the European Development Fund and revenue funding from Renaissance in the Regions. These grants have enabled the museum to redisplay most of the buildings on the site and improve visitor facilities and services.

The museum's Learning Manager, Colly Mudie, is managed by the Head of Museums Education and Access for the County Museums Service, Katrina Siliprandi, and is one of a county wide team of learning managers based at individual sites. Colly is supported by number of Theatre in Education interpreters/facilitators and has recruited a team of volunteers to support education and outreach work.



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<sup>2</sup> Ofsted inspection Downham Market High School, 2004, p 12, <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/portal/site/Internet/menuitem.7c7b38b14d870c7bb1890a01637046a0/?urn=121210&providerCategoryID=8192> [accessed 31 05 2007]

#### 6.1.4 Key findings

- **The relationship between the museum and the school matters**

The model of using theatre in education actors had been tested and refined by the museum over several years. At the same time the model was flexible enough to be adapted by the museum in response to the school's needs. The model for the visit was evaluated and changes made in response to school comments. Individual teachers and the learning manager in the museum planned the session to enable pupils to gain the most from it. At the same time the general template of the visit was well established and could be repeated for other schools. The relationship between the museum and the school is of paramount importance. The museum welcomed the school's suggestions and the school and the museum had built up a relationship of trust and mutual respect. In this case study the rapport between the teachers and the museum was evident and an important factor in ensuring the success of the visit.

- **It is important for teachers undertaking visits to schools to have support from within their institutions.**

The use of Gressenhall by Downham Market High School was facilitated by a whole school approach to learning and the importance placed by the school of extending the curriculum through field trips. Both the head teacher and the head of the sixth form supported the visit with the latter taking part.

#### **Head Teacher, Downham Market High School<sup>3</sup>**

The **Head Teacher** of Downham Market High School placed a value on the fact that the visit was linked to an assessed piece of work.

*'It gives the youngsters value. ...' 'I think it gives it status and makes it important for the youngsters.' 'It's not just seen as a jolly.'*

At the same time he had clear ideas about the value of the visit

*'It brings history to life and it gets away from the view that many young people have that history is old and boring it's to do with the past... it helps them to empathise...'*

However, he made it clear that while he emphasised the importance of the trip being linked to an assessed piece of work the final grades of the pupils compared to their peers elsewhere was not important:

*'I'm not the slightest bit interested in league tables, I'm interested in young people fulfilling their potential, developing as whole people to make them better citizens into the future... League tables do not motivate me one jot as, they do in terms of have our young people achieved what they're capable of, but I don't care whether, if I've got a clear conscience and my staff have got a clear conscience, I don't care if we're top or bottom of the league tables.'*

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<sup>3</sup> Interview with the Head Teacher 8 December 2007

And he stressed that the most important thing for pupils was:

*'... that we give them a rich experience.'*

- **The school valued the visit as much for its impact on pupils' learning and experiences as for its link with improved attainment levels in an assessed piece of work**

The two teachers interviewed by the researcher indicated<sup>4</sup> that the assignment was not the only reason for the visit. They chose a museum visit because:

- They wanted to give pupils a museum experience as many of them had never had this
- They liked the way the session encouraged pupils to look at different perspectives in history which they found more difficult to facilitate in the classroom
- It allowed the school to develop the idea of human rights with the pupils.
- It encouraged pupils to argue their case with adults and with other pupils, having formed a judgement on evidence presented to them.
- It encouraged them to see that an argument could be open-ended and that there were several legitimate points of view.
- They took out of the classroom pupils who would not normally be taken out because of their behaviour and attitude.

The day was structured so there was always someone to interact with and this helped those pupils with learning and behaviour difficulties:

*'...well for some of them it is a different way of getting through to them, a different learning strategy...'*

Pupils respond to the opportunity to put their case forward in an argument:

*'...they actually want to take part in that and become part of it, they don't want to be isolated from it.'*

- A visit to a historic site provided an added dimension to the historical study – *'there's a sense of period, a sense of time...'* The fact that the pupils could actually walk into the workhouse and experience the space and the *'presence'*
- They also hoped the visit would help the pupils with their assignment.

Specifically for the low ability students it was something that:

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<sup>4</sup> Interview with the History Teacher / Group Organiser and the Head of Sixth Form who accompanied the visit at Downham High School on 8 December 2006

*'...if it was delivered in a class room situation ...they'd probably forget it by the end of the term. For some of these students it'll be the one thing they'll remember about their school education, so it'll stay with them as a life experience rather than a school experience.'*

The Downham Market teachers were of the opinion that, as a result of the visit, students understood the complexity of the topic that they were studying and they thought that some students had improved the quality of their work. They thought this was more evident in terms of improved marks with the higher level ability pupils than the lower ones. For one student who was not stated, but whom the teachers believe to have Asperger's syndrome, the introduction of the 'Jacket woman' with the illegitimate child caused him a great deal of confusion.

- **Pupils were motivated by their emotional engagement**



For many pupils, learning was intimately connected to the emotional engagement they experienced in the museum. One thirteen year old boy

expressed it thus on his evaluation sheet in response to 'the most interesting thing about today was:'

*Discovering the point of view Isaac the 'tramp' had of the workhouse and the way they were treated there. "I would prefer to die in a ditch than be buried by the workhouse."*

Pupil N, one of the less able pupils, in an interview stated that:

*'When you're writing your essay, if we hadn't gone to Gressenhall I think it would have been not as interesting. Cos we went to Gressenhall it was like it's actually happened so we can really write about it, because we, like I think we kind of owe it to them people that put, like worked really hard in them workhouses.'*

She also commented that *'I think that will stick with me, just to think people had to suffer in there.'*

Pupil D explained that he would remember the visit *'cos of the shock about it, I thought it was all good, but then I realised it was bad. It was just the shock of it and how my opinion changed.'*

Their emotional engagement encouraged them to formulate ideas and gave them the confidence to challenge their preconceptions. In addition it helped them argue constructively with adults. Pupil D explained that he argued with one of the characters, the workhouse master, Mr Scraggs:

*'I was arguing with him about how they were treated and he said they were treated perfectly all right, they got their, they survived and everything... he was arguing that they shouldn't get Christmas dinner and he would argue with me and I just felt like standing up and shouting, it's unfair and everything.'*

- **Increased expectations/ improved confidence**

The teachers were of the opinion that the visit to the museum had helped pupils with their assignment. However, they made a clear distinction between the attainment of the lower bands and the other pupils:

*'For the lower bands it's more difficult for them to make the progress because you tend to find that they do get to almost like a level which is almost their peak. But some of them have improved, certainly in the bottom band. Top band they can make that progress because they can actually get to the higher levels. Obviously with the bottom band it is very, very difficult for them to get to the high levels.'*

However, one teacher went on to say:

*'Looking at the ones I've marked from the bottom group, there's some in there who've performed really, really well, really well, and obviously the trip has made the difference, there's no question about that.'*

The majority of the pupils enjoyed the visit and thought that it helped their understanding of the topic they were studying. They also thought it helped them improve the standard of their work.

Several pupils commented how the interactive experience of meeting characters, talking to them and having to think about different points of view enabled them to weigh up evidence and make decisions in a way that working from text books did not. In the evaluation sheets this was something many of the pupils commented upon.

One pupil, aged 13, wrote that the most interesting thing for her about the visit was:

*...the characters. They were very good at explaining the information and they all made it easier to understand. I feel that I have learnt a lot more from them than I would have if I had been at school. They helped a lot of us to make a decision about whether the workhouse was good and whether the workhouse was bad.*

One fourteen year old boy wrote:

*...learning by what I heard and saw by myself instead of what someone else had written and having a civil conversation with the role-play characters.*

One low ability pupil with behaviour problems, Pupil D, had achieved a 5/6 in his assignment whereas he normally achieved a level 4. For him it was the immersive, emotional experience that made the difference to his understanding and subsequent performance. When asked why it had been easier for him to achieve a good grade in this assignment than other assignments he replied:

*'Cos it's different instead of reading out of books. You just forget about it if you read out of books, but if you go to the trip you soak it all in, you never forget about it.'*

Pupil S in the top band went up from a level 4.5 to an 8. When asked how the trip had helped her she said the trip had made the subject more interesting for her and *'it's better than sitting in a class room all the time just keep like writing out of books and I don't know, it's better to kind of, it's more physical about the subject cos then you understand it more.'*

One boy, Pupil R, in the lower group, did not improve his grade but he nevertheless thought that the trip was worthwhile.

*'It may not have helped me sort of get like a high level but it did actually help me understand what the workhouse was like.'*

- **The importance of the sense of place**

The interaction with the real, the actual, the specific, whether it is an object or a building or a place or a mixture of all three, was very important to pupils

and teachers. In their interviews the pupils frequently mentioned the importance to them of experiencing the location itself.

Pupil G, from the top group, explained that he felt he had learnt more after the visit to Gressenhall (despite having seen a couple of videos about the workhouse and read something about them from books before he went). He said:-

*'Well because in Gressenhall you can actually see what it was like cos in the books you like could read that the beds were shaped in a certain way and stuff like that. In Gressenhall you could actually see which way they were shaped, so you could describe it in your own words for the essay, so then you could sort of, you could understand it without just reading it straight from the book.'*

Pupil N, from the lowest group, when asked to say one thing about what she remembered about it said

*'Took us into the room where if you were naughty, you got put in there, and it was just pitch black and that's how it was. And a bucket where if you needed the toilet you had to go there and just a plank of wood where you had to sleep and it was pitch black and I think that will stick with me, just to think that people had to suffer in there.'*

- **The outcomes for the pupils in terms of their learning using the Generic Learning Outcomes**

Interviews with pupils and information from evaluation sheets (names have been changed to ensure anonymity of pupils)

***Knowledge and Understanding***

Pupil R achieved a grade 6/7 for this assignment and before that had been awarded a 5. She felt that the visit had given her more details and had made her realise that not all evidence is reliable.

Pupil R liked the idea of having different points of view and felt this helped her assignment.

Pupil G was an able pupil in the top set. He clearly articulated how the visit helped him make judgements between different points of view. He used the example of the workhouse master saying the food was good, the tramp saying the food was bad, and his research from books and came to a conclusion that the food was 'pretty gruesome.'

Pupil R from the lowest group achieved a 5/6 his normal mark for these types of assignments. He believed that the visit helped him – *'It may not have helped sort of get like a high level, but it did actually help me understand what the workhouse was like.'*

Pupil S was in the lowest set and was very clear about how the visit helped her. She thought that having the actors was useful to her in undertaking her

piece of assessed work, in particular being able to talk to them to find out more about the workhouse.

Most pupils when filling in the section about the most interesting thing about their visit did not refer to the assessed piece of work. However, one thirteen year old boy stated that the most interesting thing for him had been:

*...learning about the coffin and the farming (sic) skills used. I think this will help me in my assignment.*

Another pupil, T, was confused by what was real and what was not real and did not really engage with the evidence. He thought the workhouse was better for everyone than being outside with the 'diseases.'

### **Skills**

The session was designed to encourage pupils to think about different points of view so they could write a piece of work weighing up evidence about the workhouse. It is clear from pupil comments in interviews that this was something they liked doing and in which they had gained in confidence.

Pupil R explained the visit had helped her make her own judgements... *'so my judgements are important how I say it'*

It was clear from the quotations in the section 'The most interesting thing about today was..' that the idea of different perspectives stimulated a great deal of interest:

*'Everybody's opinions and different views really helped decision making.'*

*'Don't believe ever think (sic) you hare (sic) and find all the facts before goin (sic) on someones side.'*

### **Enjoyment, Inspiration, Creativity**

Pupil D is a boy with behaviour difficulties who would not normally be taken out of school. He has a disrupted home life, is low achieving and rarely hands in course work to be assessed, but he likes history. After the visit, Pupil D talked enthusiastically about his views of the treatment of the workhouse inmates and was greatly interested in a range of issues including the discrimination shown to certain paupers. This he felt was wrong. He had emotionally engaged with the session, stating that people should not be punished for giving food to their friends or trying to see their loved ones. He confessed that he had argued with the workhouse master:

*'I just felt like standing up and shouting, it's unfair and everything.'*

He also explained that his views about the workhouse had changed. At first he believed the workhouse was not too bad but after meeting certain characters he realised it was *'quite bad.'* For his assignment, Pupil D achieved a grade and a half increase in attainment (from a four to a 5/6). This assignment and the grading made him feel better about himself.

In contrast, Pupil C is a very able boy regularly achieving marks at grade 8. He had done a great deal of research before the visit on the workhouse using the library and the Internet. He agreed with the researcher that he was highly motivated and wanted to go on and study history further. For him the visit offered the following:

- An experience that he found enjoyable - *'you learn more from experience and stuff than you would just reading it.'* For him this was both a sense of place (the building) and meeting the people
- It was memorable
- Material for his assignment to demonstrate different views of the workhouse.

Pupil L was in the top group and her assignment had achieved a grade 8, two whole levels up from her previous grade of 6, and before that a grade 4. For her the experience changed the way she felt about the subject. She was not confident about her ability and she said she never used to like history *'cos I thought it was a bit boring.'* However, for her the trip to Gressenhall:

*'helped like cos it was something fun to do and it's better than sitting in a classroom all the time just keep like writing out of books and... it's more physical about the subject cos then you understand it more.'*

Pupil S from the bottom set also made the point that talking to the actors was more interesting than getting the information out of a book:

*'If we were in lesson, all the evidence that you've got is from books, but seeing as they got actors in who have like, know about all that had happened . You can actually talk to them so you're not, you're not talking to a book.'*

One fourteen year old girl stated that the most interesting thing about the visit to the museum was:

*...learning about how the inmates at the workhouse were treated. It was good because all of the characters had different opinions and characteristics. I learnt more than I would have done at school because it was interesting.*

Another fourteen year old girl identified with the teenage inmates. She wrote:

*'...going back i in time to feel how a single teenager would of felt!! Also hearing different point views!!'*

### **Attitudes and Values**

Pupil N from the bottom set felt motivated to do well because she felt she *'owed it'* to the people who had lived in the workhouse.

*'I think we kind of owe it to them people that put, like worked really hard in them workhouses.'*

For her too the sense of place was very important as it helped her to imagine what it was like:

*'[They] took us into a room whether if you were naughty you got put in there, and it was just pitch black and that's how it was. And a bucket where if you needed the toilet you had to go there and just a plank of wood where you had to sleep and it was pitch black and I think that will stick with me, just to think that people had to suffer in there.'*

These pupils were learning to use empathy and to use their feelings to develop their own attitudes to work and life.

### **Action, Behaviour and Progression**

For one pupil the enthusiasm engendered in him by the visit motivated him to complete the assignment. When Pupil D was asked about his assignments he acknowledged they were often late because:

*'I'm not excited cos I think I'll get a bad grade. But this time it was on time cos I thought I would get a good grade and I was excited about it.'*

Other pupils were able to reflect on how their understanding had been enhanced by the visit, for instance one 14 year old boy wrote:

*...when we was with the tramp and he gave us a better understanding of how the people were treated in the workhouses.*

A fourteen year old girl wrote:

*...talking to the actors/actress. The role play was excellent. It will help me with the rest of my work by thinking about the characters.*

One thirteen year old boy was very confident about how his work would improve:

*The role play, it was verry (sic) well done, it made me understand the subject much better than school could. I will do much better at my essay.*

The idea that what they had learnt that day at the museum could not be learnt at school was articulated by several pupils in their evaluation sheet. One fourteen year old boy wrote:

*The way the characters had totally different opinions on things. The workhouse master and the school master made themselves out to be saints and the paupers described themselves as ill-treated slaves. I think this will help me with my essay.*

One thirteen year old girl wrote:

*Learning how strict they were in the schools and how they learnt. Also how harsh they were. I am glad I came as I feel that I will do better in my assignment when I get back to school.'*

A thirteen year old girl reflected on difference between nineteenth-century and contemporary schools when she wrote:

*'...in the schoolroom as it was a different way of learning, compared to this day and age.'*

Another thirteen year old girl wrote that the most interesting thing for her was:

*'...experiencing the school room as it made me realise that the education at most workhouses was quite good. I also found the jacket woman telling us about how they treated her quite interesting because – it's good to hear the point of view from her'.*

For one fourteen year old:

*...The role play was interesting. It gave me a better understanding of the workhouse. It was good to have people with different view points. Having different view points makes you think more deeply about things said.*



- **Additional findings**

***Motivation and interest***

It was clear from the evaluation sheet comments in response to the open question, '*The most interesting thing about today was..*' that pupils thought

they had learned in a different way from school, one that made learning more interesting for them.

*'How the people were treated and how they were punished. I have learnt more here than I have at school.'*

*'The way the characters make the subject more interesting – by showing us what happened in the workhouse in a way which we will remember. I also enjoyed the debating which helps to understand both points of view.'*

One thirteen year old boy wrote succinctly: *'We was having fun.'*

Another thirteen year old boy wrote

*'Everything! I really enjoyed it and I will definitely come again. My favourite bit was when we talked to the master and the only bad bit was when I forgot to buy something in the shop.'*

### **Active learning**

Museums, and in particular this session, provide opportunities for active learning. When asked what they enjoyed most about their visit pupils often selected something in which they had participated:

*The best bit of the day is when we argued with the workhouse master.*

*The school because they had to keep repeating things and do handwriting.*

The physical space was also important. One thirteen year old boy wrote:

*When I saw all the different rooms like the chapel, school room and a small cottage the different people were great and learnt me a lot about the good and bad things of the workhouse.*

### • **Assessment marks**

Downham Market provided marks for 287 pupils, and up to three marks for previous history assignments from year 8. Marks were linked to the National Curriculum levels from 1 to 8 and each class teacher commented on whether they thought each pupil had improved their mark, stayed the same, or fallen. Analysis of the marks revealed the following:

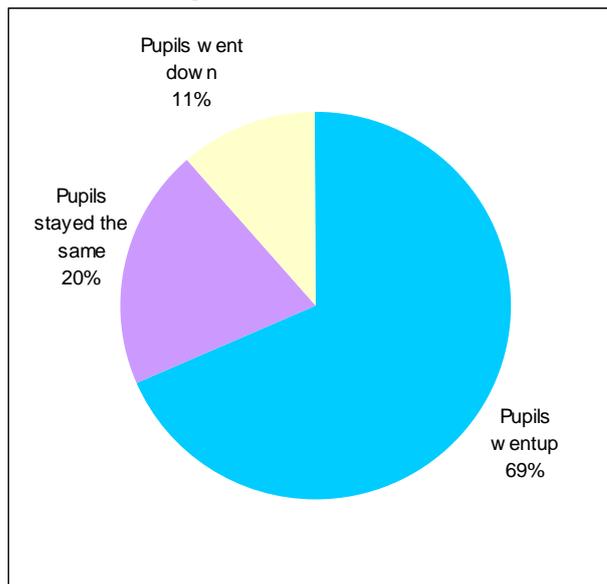
- 69% of pupils improved their marks, and of these 48% increased by 1 level or more. Two pupils went up by as much as 3 levels
- 20% of pupils produced work of the same standard that they had previously produced
- 11% of pupils experienced a decrease in their marks and of these pupils, 5% fell by less than 1 mark and 6% fell by 1 level. Three pupils in all saw a decrease in their marks by 2 levels.

Pupils expressed a great deal of satisfaction with their visit, with 93% agreeing in their evaluation sheets that they enjoyed the day's visit, 97% agreeing that they discovered some interesting things from the visit, 95% agreeing that the visit had given them a better understanding of the subject, 93% agreeing that the museum is a good place to learn in a different way to school, and 86% agreeing that they could make sense of most of the things they saw and did in the museum. These findings may help to explain why such a high proportion of pupils did so well in their assessed piece of work but they do not provide any explanation as to why some pupils actually went down in their levels. However, as the results were returned on a class by class basis, it was possible to look at whether some classes did better than others. One class in particular did not do as well as only 16% of pupils from this class achieved a higher mark in their museum-based assignment, and 40% of pupils in this class experienced a decline in their marks compared to previous assignments. This is compared to 68% of all pupils from the school achieving a higher mark in their museum-based assignment and only 11% experiencing a fall in their marks. It was suggested by the school that the individual teacher had a negative impact on pupils' responses to the visit and on their assessed pieces of work. This example illustrates just how important it is for individual teachers to support museum visits if pupils are to gain the most benefit from them.



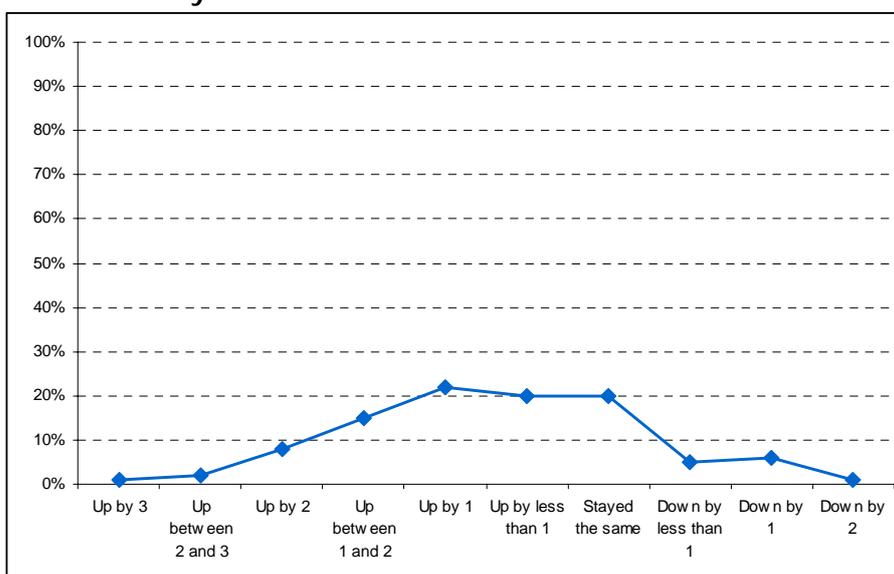
Out of 287 students who participated in the museum visit 69% improved their assessed grades, 20% stayed the same and 11% went down.

**Fig. 6.1.4a: Assessment marks. Pupils from Downham Market High School, breakdown by increase or decrease**



N=275

**Fig. 6.1.4b: Assessment marks. Pupils from Downham Market High School, breakdown by rate of increase or decrease**



N=275

### 6.1.5. Conclusions

This was a tried and tested session with a school that had already built up a good relationship with a museum. Most teachers were able to make the best use of the visit, preparing the pupils well, and supporting their work back in the classroom. Pupils responded very positively to the visit and became emotionally engaged and motivated by the interaction with the characters

and the experience of seeing the original workhouse and some of the objects associated with it. There appears to have been a high level of intrinsic motivation in the work the pupils completed following their visit. They enjoyed the visit, found it stimulating and interesting, collected plenty of material for their assignment and were motivated to do well because of this enjoyment. At the same time several hoped to achieve higher grades and were able to use the material to do this, thus displaying extrinsic motivation.

Learning was embedded in the assignment. Pupils developed skills such as weighing up different opinions, developing debating techniques and assessing evidence, and several acknowledged that this learning experience had helped them develop confidence in themselves. Indeed one of the impressive and difficult to measure outcomes of this museum visit appears to have been an improvement in confidence and self esteem amongst pupils, particularly amongst those who did not normally achieve high grades in assignments. Teachers were pleasantly surprised by the improvement in the grades of hitherto low achieving pupils.

The findings of the measurement of assessed pieces of work were better than expected. Out of 287 students who participated in the museum visit 69% improved their assessed grades, 20% stayed the same and 11% went down.

## **CASE STUDY 2: *Houses, habitats and homelessness***

<b>6.2</b>	<b><i>Houses, habitats and homelessness</i></b>	<b>174</b>
	<b>Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse and Fakenham High School, Norfolk</b>	
6.2.1	<b>Overview</b>	174
6.2.2	<b>Research Process</b>	175
6.2.3	<b>Context and Background</b>	175
	• Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse	175
	• Fakenham High School and College	176
	• Teachers' objectives	176
6.2.4	<b>A description of the Houses, Habitats and Homelessness programme</b>	177
6.2.5	<b>Key findings</b>	180
	• Long term planning by museum education staff with teachers and other educational professionals was an important factor in developing this successful programme for schools.	180
	• Learning was developed through discussion and interaction with adults	182
	• Learning was promoted by emotional engagement with the 'real thing' in an environment that was richer than that offered by the classroom	182
	• Learning was active and did not involve writing	183
	• Pupils were intrinsically motivated to do well	184
	• Learning within the museum will be developed in later years.	184
	• Learning in the sessions was apparent from the interviews and has been categorised according to the GLOS	184
	• Assessment marks	187
6.2.6	<b>Conclusion</b>	188

## CASE STUDY 2: *Houses, habitats and homelessness*

### 6.2 *Houses, habitats and homelessness*

Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse and Fakenham High School, Norfolk



#### 6.2.1 Overview

This case study involved the whole of Year 7 from Fakenham High School and College, 138 pupils in all, participating in *Houses, Habitats and Homelessness*, an all day education programme offered to secondary schools by Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse in Norfolk. Pupils considered evidence for and against the building of houses on a greenfield site, in this instance meadows on Gressenhall farm. Designed to support the geography National Curriculum the programme has cross-curricular links to citizenship and uses Theatre in Education to engage the pupils in a similar way to that used by the session *Was the workhouse so bad?* (see Case Study 1). Pupils weighed up arguments and came to their own conclusions, having discussed and argued their views with the characters in role and between themselves. Unusually, perhaps, the pupils did not have to write anything down at any point during the day but completed an assessment back in the classroom where they have to write down in a grid the pros and cons of building on a greenfield site and develop their written arguments for and against the development.

*Houses, Habitats and Homelessness* was developed by Colly Mudie the learning officer in collaboration with Robert Lodge, the Senior Strategy Advisor, Norfolk's children's services and specialist in Geography and other

teachers. It was designed to build up an assessment for years 7, 8 and 9 for Key stage 3. It is a tried and tested session whose popularity with schools has developed by word of mouth amongst teachers and through recommendation by the advisor. Minor adjustments can be made to the programme to accommodate individual school needs but each session remains essentially the same. This model of museum staff, teachers and advisors working together has been so successful that it is now being rolled out to other museums in the county museum service.

Fakenham High School had not participated in the programme before and thus the case study is an interesting example of how effective 'off the peg' museum sessions can be when linked to an assessed piece of work. It also demonstrates how important it is for museums to work with other educational experts and teachers when developing such programmes of work.

This case study of Fakenham High School and Gressenhall museum was selected when a potential case study, involving a grammar school visit to Imperial War Museum Duxford, was cancelled at last minute notice. RCMG is grateful to Fakenham High School for agreeing to take part in this research at a few day's notice.

### **6.2.2 Research process**

The account of this case study is based on the observations of the school visit to Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse made by Sheila Watson on 30 April 2007. On that day Colly Mudie, the Learning Manager for the museum, was interviewed both before and after the school visit. The researcher observed one school group and followed this group round from activity to activity. During the lunch break informal interviews were held with the leaders and helpers of each activity (some paid and some volunteers). At the end of the day there was an opportunity to interview Robert Lodge the Senior Strategy Advisor, Norfolk Children's Services and specialist in Geography and also a teacher from Aylsham High School, both of whom had been part of the small working party that had set up the first trial sessions two years before. The Aylsham teacher had previously brought pupils to experience the *Houses, Habitats and Homelessness* session. All pupils filled in an evaluation form on the day.

Sheila Watson visited the school on 12 June 2007 to interview two teachers and some of the pupils who had visited Gressenhall on the day of the observation.

### **6.2.3 Context and Background**

- **Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse**

Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse (re-branded in 2007 and formerly Roots of Norfolk or Norfolk Rural Life Museum) is situated outside Dereham in mid Norfolk. It occupies 50 acres and the site includes the old workhouse which has now been converted into a museum of Norfolk rural life and also tells the workhouse story. It contains a small farm and environmental area where

traditional farming practices are demonstrated. It is part of the county museums service (Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service) and has received capital grants from Heritage Lottery Fund and the European Development Fund and revenue funding from Renaissance. These grants have enabled the museum to redisplay most of the buildings on the site and improve visitor facilities and services.

The Museum's Learning Manager, Colly Mudie, is managed by the Head of Museums Education and Access for the County Museums Service, Katrina Siliprandi, and is one of a county wide team of learning managers based at individual sites. Colly is supported by a number of paid interpreters/facilitators and has recruited a team of volunteers to support education and outreach work.

- **Fakenham High School and College**

Fakenham High School and College is a comprehensive school for pupils aged from 11–19 years with about 1450 pupils on roll. It serves a large catchment area in North Norfolk which includes not only Fakenham itself but a number of rural parishes. It is a popular school and enrolls the maximum number of pupils it can accept each year. It is a Technology College and has also received funding to develop a specialism in Vocational Education. The latest Ofsted report in February 2004 reported that:

'The quality of the education provided in the school is good. The quality of teaching is good overall. It is satisfactory in years 7 to 9, with the greatest strengths in year 7, good in GCSE years and very good in the sixth form. A key strength is the teachers' subject knowledge, which leads to high expectations and challenging work for students.'<sup>1</sup>

- **Teachers' objectives**

***The field trip linked to assessment***

The visit was organised by the KS3 Geography co-ordinator at Fakenham High School, on the recommendation of another teacher in another school. For her the most important element was the field trip.

*'...we knew that it had worked with other students with other schools, then we decided to use that one as well. So I think for us the fieldwork was the priority and the assessment kind of second.'*<sup>2</sup>

However, had the museum not offered an assessment she would have developed one herself. For her the fact that the museum offered a tailor made assessment was a '*bonus*.'

The visit was supported by a second teacher who accompanied the pupils and who sees learning and assessment as interdependent:

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<sup>1</sup> Ofsted Report, Fakenham High School, February 2004

<sup>2</sup> Interview with the KS3 Geography co-ordinator, 12 June 2007

*'...both are equally important... otherwise you could say go on a trip, have a very nice time... and now there's something else.'*

This combination of objectives and the focus on the field trip was not particular to Fakenham High School. One of the geography teachers from Aylsham High School interviewed briefly by the researcher (one of the schools who took part in the development of the session) also thought that the key thing was to have a field trip for all her Year 8 and to incorporate some thinking skills. The assessed piece of work was of secondary importance but was, nevertheless, a key element in the attractiveness of the session.

The field trip thus had added value because an assessed piece of work was integrated within it. It was an opportunity for pupils to work at a higher level. One of the teachers from Fakenham High School commented that:

*'...in attainment we're looking at Key stage 3 and the National Curriculum. I think what you're doing is you're almost arming students, you're giving them the learning experience, you're giving them the facts with which they could then start to show more independence in putting together their own explanations about what they think may happen in a future in a particular area. That, by its very nature, is going to give them access to the very, very high national curriculum levels.'*

### ***Opportunities for pupils of all abilities to achieve something***

For the KS3 Geography co-ordinator the visit provided opportunities for students of all abilities to achieve something, of which there were three key elements. Firstly, the pupils' emotional engagement with one particular character was important, the developer Mr Nash, who encouraged pupils to argue with him. Pupils were proud of having sustained an argument with him and were very keen to tell the teacher what he and they said to each other. They also became emotionally engaged with the concept of building on greenfield sites when in the actual environment:

*'When they actually saw what was happening then it meant much more to them...'*

The second element was the fact that pupils also enjoyed the hands on activity when they dissected owl pellets. Lots of them apparently *'kept their little skulls... they were proud they were able to do that.'*

Finally, the third element was the fact that the characters encouraged *'the different abilities [of pupils] to think more deeply.'* The actors in role shared dilemmas with the pupils, making it clear that there was not a simple right or wrong answer.

Both teachers felt that the less well behaved pupils were no trouble on the day because they had enjoyed the session; they had been encouraged to participate, they felt valued and understood what was going on.

#### 6.2.4 A description of the *Houses, Habitats and Homelessness* programme



During the day, pupils were divided into four groups and spent half their time on the museum farm and half their time in the main buildings. They met four characters in role, the farmer's wife, thinking of selling the land for development, the developer from London, the odd job man soon to be homeless and hoping for a place to rent in the proposed new development, and the environmentalist who opposed the development. The roles were quite nuanced. For example, the farmer's wife presented a picture of a failing farm, problems with sustaining the farming life for her sons, but she also spoke of her reluctance to sell and worried about the impact of the development on the village and the environment. She asked pupils for suggestions as to how she could diversify her business and thus avoid selling the farm. The environmentalist, however, presented a completely one sided view of the development (i.e. totally opposed to it because of its impact on wildlife), although she did encourage pupils to challenge her views.



The environmentalist and the farmer's wife encouraged participation. Their sessions were very interactive. The farmer took pupils on a tractor ride in a wagon around the museum farm, stopping at various points to explain where the houses might be sited and how the farm was currently run. The environmentalist took pupils to the water meadows to show them the owl's 'Tesco' where the owls hunted. She also took them to a barn in the museum where they saw, via a television screen, live pictures of birds and their young in nests around the farm. She offered them various birds' wings to touch and showed them a stuffed owl. The *piece de resistance* of her session was the dissection (with help from museum volunteers) of owl pellets, (or 'sick' as the pupils referred to them), and the finding within them of bones of small animals including skulls of mice.

The odd job man and the developer appeared to provoke more discussion and arguments (possibly because the group observed by the researcher saw these last when the pupils had acquired enough information to engage in debate). The developer (in a room in the museum) asked pupils to help him decide where, on the proposed development site, he should build his houses. He had a large model of the site and miniature houses which pupils could place on the model. These houses represented different styles, ranging from executive detached dwellings to small terraced houses. Pupils spent time trying to work out if they could reconcile environmental concerns, (mainly how to protect the owls' habitats), with the need for housing in the area. Pupils discussed with him a range of issues including the need for social housing (which he had originally not planned to include in the site), second home owners and the dangers of positioning houses on a flood plain by a river.

The session with the odd job man was the least physically interactive of all the sessions although it did provoke some pupils (not all) into arguing with the character. Pupils sat in a semicircle while 'Jimmy' described his background and his difficulties in finding a new place to live now his old place (rented) had been bought up by a Londoner as a holiday home. He graphically described his background and asked pupils for help in finding a room to rent. At first pupils were inclined to be hostile to him. They demanded to know why he didn't go somewhere else to find housing and why he didn't buy his own place. Jimmy gave an example of his earnings, explained he had lived in Norwich once but had succumbed to the temptation of drink, his wife had left him and all he wanted now was to live quietly near his job in a shared rented house. He gave out photocopies of advertisements for local properties to rent and asked the pupils to find him a house within his budget which they were unable to do. One pupil asked why he didn't go to the council for a council house? That provoked him into a bitter diatribe against unmarried mothers taking up all the accommodation with their children. Some pupils took issue with this and did not accept his argument that unmarried women should not have children if they could not provide houses for themselves.

At the end of the sessions with the characters all the pupils met in the deconsecrated chapel (which acted as a lecture room) and were told to debate in small groups of 4 or 5 the proposal to allow the developer to

develop the land. They then reported back in groups, to their peers and the characters in role, as though to a planning committee. Their presentations took into account a range of issues. About half wanted the development to go ahead (because of jobs and housing) while half wanted to oppose it (because of the detrimental effect on the environment). The pupils were very enthusiastic about this part of the presentation. They appeared to enjoy it and were very confident. The volunteers and session leaders told the researcher that it was always interesting to see how each school responded and every time it was different.

### 6.2.5 Key findings

- **Long term planning by museum education staff with teachers and other educational professionals was an important factor in developing this successful programme for schools**

*Houses, Habitats and Homelessness* was originally developed three years ago, by Colly Mudie, the Museum's Learning Manager in partnership with Robert Lodge, the Senior Strategy Advisor, Norfolk Children's Services and specialist in Geography, and geography teachers including one from Aylsham High School. A small working party met monthly for about 5 months, brainstorming and developing the session which was then piloted and adapted following evaluation by the teachers. The approach was very open-ended with the museum prepared to develop a session to fit in with what the advisor and the teachers wanted, and the idea of the *Houses, Habitats and Homelessness* session was worked up from scratch to fit in with the opportunities offered by the site and the needs of the National Curriculum. It was subsequently evaluated and modified to facilitate its use by different age groups. The Advisor wanted to develop a different geographical learning experience in an environment that would not normally be associated with geography so that pupils see that geography is more than text books. For him the museum was an ideal location as it offered an experienced teacher (the museum's learning manager) to support schools and was an excellent site as it contained a river, a farm, the old workhouse (now museum) and a range of habitats.

Colly Mudie, the Learning Manager at Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse, developed the session to extend the museum's programme to secondary schools. It was also an opportunity to work with advisors and teachers. In particular she wanted to develop sessions for KS 3 pupils and to link their work to assessment. She found that teachers liked the idea that it was linked to attainment measured through a piece of assessed work. It was originally developed for year 9, the most active users of this session, but was now being used for years 7 and 8 as well. It has been so popular that Gressenhall can no longer accommodate the numbers who want to do it. In the week in which the researcher observed the session four High Schools had participated in it. This model of teachers, museum staff and advisors working together has been so successful it is now being rolled out to the Castle Museum, Norwich and Time and Tide Museum, Great Yarmouth. For the museum the advisor's input was crucial as his involvement gave the session credibility and he encouraged teachers to book for it. Sessions such as this one that are linked

to assessment enable the museum to attract older secondary school pupils that do not normally visit with their school.

The session covers both geography and citizenship and the Learning Manager commented that this mix of two or more disciplines is increasingly popular with schools. Each school wanted something slightly different and each session accommodates this, although the programme the students experienced remained the same in its fundamental elements for all schools. It was linked to key developmental stages in learning.



The use of Theatre in Education actors in various locations around the site facilitated the visit of large numbers of pupils on one day. This accommodation of large groups makes it much easier for schools to organise field trips and is the result of the museum responding to the needs of schools. The professionalism of the actors and their ability of respond to different reactions from a range of pupils was much appreciated by the teachers and reflects not only the actors' skills but also indicates how well the sessions had been devised by the Learning Manager. Such skills have been honed and developed with practice and the sessions have been evaluated and improved over time. The museum is thus able to offer to schools a tried and tested 'package' which is promoted by word of mouth amongst teachers.

The KS3 Geography co-ordinator at Fakenham High School organised the visit because it was recommended by another teacher and was delighted by how well structured the day was. She was able to 'buy into' an established education session and use all the materials the museum provided. For her the main purpose was the field trip, not the assessment. The latter was '*a bonus.*' Had the museum not provided her with a ready made assessment she would

have designed one herself as a follow up to the visit and the fact that one was available added to the attraction of the session.

The programme offered by the museum takes a realistic view of the time teachers are able to spend preparing and developing sessions with museums and offers a model of good practice for museums seeking to extend their relationship with secondary schools. It depends, however, on the museum employing an experienced education or learning officer, confident in working with older pupils and able to train others to do so. When she first developed such sessions with older pupils the Learning Manager encountered some anxieties amongst the actors and some other museum staff who were concerned about issues of managing the behaviour of, and engaging with, older pupils. However, so successful have these purpose-designed sessions been that these anxieties have been laid to rest, and actors, staff and volunteers have confidence working with this age group.

- **Learning was developed through discussion and interaction with adults**

The KS3 Geography co-ordinator was very pleased with the way in which two of the characters, in particular, engaged the pupils - Mr Nash, the developer, and Pam, the environmentalist. This engagement effectively involved the pupils:

*'[Mr Nash] was the one who really got the students riled the most and really getting into it and they were so proud that they could argue with Mr Nash and they've come back to me saying this is what Mr Nash said, he said.'*

She was particularly pleased at the way in which pupils were encouraged to see more than one viewpoint.

*'...as part of the assessment we had to try to encourage them, they had to reach their conclusion. So you know, there's not a wrong, everyone's got their own opinion and you have to, you know, persuade people what you think.'*

Pupils of all abilities were felt to have benefited from this approach.

Another teacher who accompanied the school to Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse added that it was incredibly important for students to have an opportunity to engage with learning outside the classroom and to meet people they have never met before. He believed it gave them better direction and also motivated them more in the longer-term.

- **Learning was promoted by emotional engagement with the 'real thing' in an environment that was richer than that offered by the classroom.**

For the KS3 Geography co-ordinator the actual visit itself brought unexpected benefits. She observed that the students became emotionally engaged in the idea of greenfield and brownfield sites, something that they had covered before in the class room without such engagement. She commented that

*'I think that they maybe didn't care that much before, oh well its green fields, oh it's brown, you know, it didn't make much... But when they actually saw what was happening, then it meant much more to them.'*

The sense of place was powerful.

- **Learning was active and did not involve writing**



The KS3 Geography co-ordinator thought that pupils of all abilities were able to participate in the session at Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse because:

*'...there was no writing and I thought that was brilliant.. It was almost a chance to be naughty by arguing, you know, they wouldn't get a chance to argue back in a classroom and yet they were allowed to kind of argue their point with Mr Nash, so I think that was good for them.'*

Back in the classroom to complete their assessment the pupils were inspired by the discussions that they in the museum:

*'I think a lot of them enjoyed doing the assessment. It wasn't seen as just a test, it was seen as their way to actually get across all their viewpoints and what they thought and to share what actually happened with each character and so on... and cos they used these different skills, there was an opportunity for everyone to actually be able to do well in it.'*

The second Geography teacher agreed that the main characteristic of learning that took place in the museum was that pupils did not have to write things down and that learning was discussion based. He also thought that it was important to have 'hands on' activities and thought that some of the

lower ability pupils would have difficulty engaging with complex issues when they encountered them in discussion and argument. Certainly many of the pupils commented in Form B on how much they had enjoyed the physical activities such as dissecting the owl pellets.

- **Pupils were intrinsically motivated to do well.**

Pupils were motivated to work hard on their assignments because they understood the session well, were interested in the issues and had emotionally engaged in the subject.

Some of the pupils interviewed by the researcher thought that the visit to the museum helped improve their grades. One girl said she normally rushed her work, however this time:

*'... it was more interesting, I had much more to say about it. So I did take a little bit longer.'*

- **Learning within the museum will be developed in later years.**

There was the potential for the work done at the museum to support learning not just in the year in which the session was undertaken but also in future years. As one teacher commented:

*'I think ...it actually motivates them in the long term.'*

- **Learning in the sessions was apparent from the interviews and has been categorised according to the GLOS**

#### ***Knowledge and understanding***

It was clear that pupils had learnt new information from the session at Gressenhall. After the visit, one girl wrote that the most interesting thing about the visit had been:

*...seeing the bird boxes on the TV and seeing what was in the owl sick.*

Another girl wrote that the most interesting thing in her opinion:

*...was the acting and arguments and understanding.*

Three lower ability pupils, interviewed after the visit, were confident that the visit had helped them understand the issues. They thought that their grades would go up as a result of the visit because:

*'You get more information.'*

*'I wouldn't have known that much about all these characters if I'd read it in a book.'*

*'They made learning fun...If you just read it in a book it's like packing information in, it's boring. It goes through one ear and out the other...'*

The fact that these pupils enjoyed doing the assignment was a departure for them because usually they did not enjoy book-based learning.

### **Skills**

Several pupils in their evaluation sheets stated that they most enjoyed arguing with the characters. It is clear that the session helped them develop the confidence to form an opinion and debate it with adults.

One girl wrote that the most interesting thing she did was to

*'Try to persuade Mr Nash [the developer] to change his mind because it will destroy the farm and environment' [sic]*

Another eleven year old summed up that the most interesting thing for her was *'arguing'* and two other girls said it helped them *'think about an opinion.'*

In an interview with the researcher one girl made it clear how her thinking had changed. She was able to reflect on this:

*'At the start I was really against it [the development on the fields] but then this girl like changed it around because if the woman who'd done the owls, Pam, well they could all collect the owls up and put them in like an owl sanctuary and like they can be adopted or something. But in the end I did think Mr Nash's proposal was a little bit bad.'*

She said that in the end that she could see good and bad points to the development and only voted against it because she thought brownfield sites should be built on first.

Another girl reflected on the fact that the farmer did not want to sell the land but had no income and had asked for ideas as to how to diversify. She had come up with some ideas and thought that this might save the farm. She was able to see that the problem was a complex one and there were many different ways of looking at it.

### **Enjoyment inspiration creativity**

One twelve year old boy wrote that the most interesting thing from the visit was:

*'...all of it because the actors made it fun.'*

One girl talked about how she felt that going to the museum was better than classroom learning because it enabled her to have a direct experience with the issue that they had to write about:

*'It is better cos like you can actually see the people and the problem and like you can be in it and sort of experience it.'*

### ***Attitudes and values***

When three lower ability boys were asked what decision they had come to on the day, the boys explained that they voted not to build on the Greenfield site because:

*'it can destroy the environment... because the owl nature person like was talking to us and it was quite touching.'*

The teacher who had observed the interview afterwards remarked on that comment that she had not expected the boys to empathise with the owls. It was clear from this interview that the boys had become engaged in environmental issues and had changed their minds about the importance of the environment, valuing it more, as a result of the visit.

Some pupils demonstrated an interest in the process of decision making in the planning process. One eleven year old girl wrote that the most interesting thing about the visit for her was:

*...the fact that all the characters had a different opinion and you had to vote for what you want to happen to the land.*

Another eleven year old girl had begun to understand different perspectives during the visit and for her this was fascinating:

*...the reasons people didn't want the houses and why they did...*

One of the girls interviewed at the school was clear that her attitudes towards the environment had changed as a result of the visit:

*'Before we went on the trip... I didn't really care about like people moving into houses and building stuff. But I've like realised like cos... when we saw the wildlife what would be damaged if they blitz that. And before I didn't really care but it has changed my view.'*



### **Action behaviour progression**

One twelve year old girl described how her thinking changed as the day went on. For her the most interesting part of the visit was:

*The different arguments the characters made because they all had very good points and every time one of them projected (sic) an opinion my opinion was swayed.*

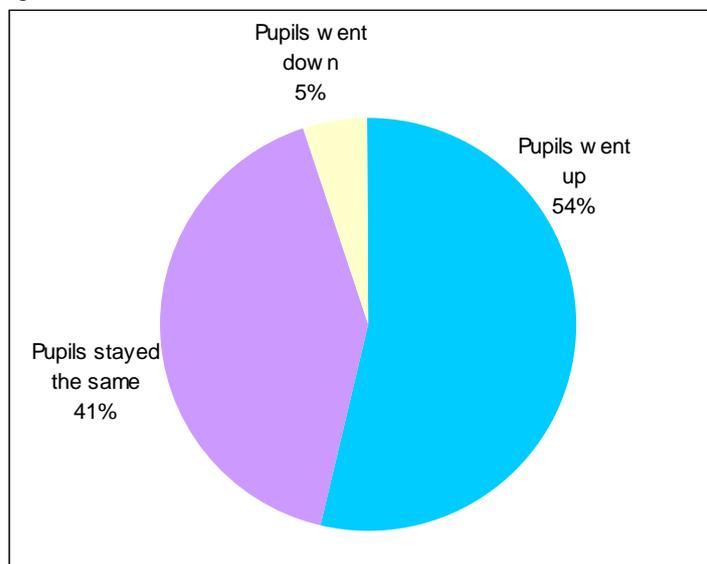
This pupil has begun to understand the complexity of decision making in the public arena and how difficult it can be to reach a consensus.

- **Assessment marks**

The school provided assessment marks for 138 pupils along with two marks for Geography assignments and one from the KS2 English SATs score. The marks given were similar to National Curriculum levels, ranging from 3 – 6 with plus (+) and minus (-) refinements.

The visit had a beneficial effect in terms of marks achieved for more than half the pupils, although the measured rise in attainment level was relatively small. Fig. 6.2.5b: shows that just over half the pupils from Fakenham High School experienced an increase in their marks for the Gressenhall-related assignment with 54% of pupils registering an increase in their marks, 42% staying at the same level and 5% experiencing a decline in their assignment marks.

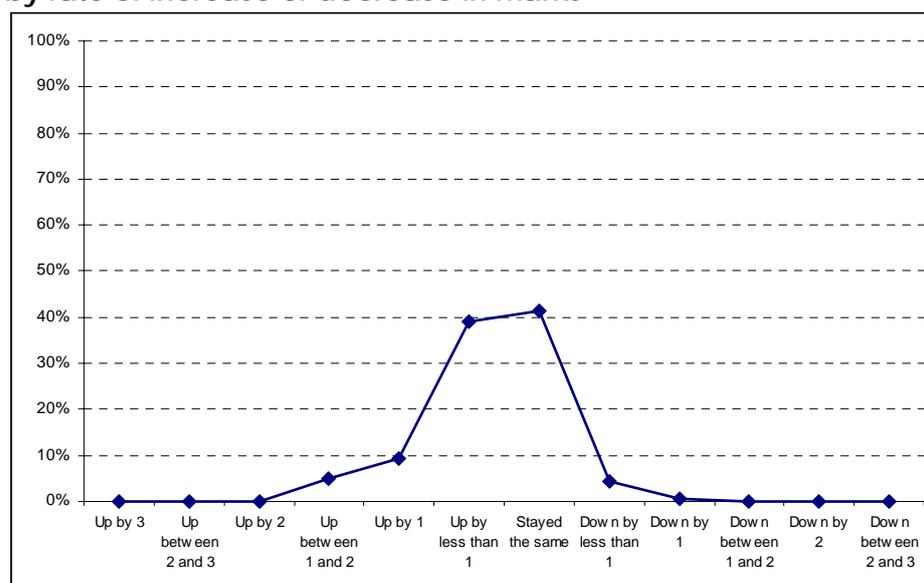
**Fig. 6.2.5b: Assessment marks. Pupils from Fakenham High School, breakdown by increase or decrease in marks**



N=138

Thirty-nine per cent (39%) of pupils saw their marks increase by less than one level and the remaining 14% saw their marks increase by 1 or between the 1 and 2 levels. Pupils whose marks went down tended to fall by less than 1 level (Fig. 6.2.5c below).

**Fig. 6.2.5c: Assessment marks. Pupils from Fakenham High School, breakdown by rate of increase or decrease in marks**



N=138

Pupils from Fakenham High School were also enthusiastic about their museum visit in their responses to the pupils' questionnaire, Form B. Eighty-five per cent (85%) of pupils agreed that they enjoyed the visit and 83% agreed that the museum is a good place to learn in a different way to school. Sixty-nine per cent (69%) of pupils agreed the visit had given them a better understanding of the subject.

Unlike other studies there was a clear gender divide between pupils from Fakenham High School with girls more likely to improve their marks (63%) than boys (46%). This gender difference was not seen in other schools in the study and cannot be accounted for without more research.

### 6.2.6 Conclusion

This case study is an interesting example of the way museums can develop complex programmes of work for secondary school pupils following consultation with teachers and advisors, and how the programme thus developed can act as a successful template for several schools.

It provides evidence that pupils enjoy the opportunity to engage in debate with adults and can use the debates to understand that there is not necessarily a right or a wrong answer, but merely different opinions.

Out of 138 pupils who undertook the assessment 54% improved their grades, 41% stayed the same and 5% went down, thus indicating that the visit had a beneficial effect on more than half the year group.

## CASE STUDY 3: *Extraordinary people and things*

6.3	<i>'Extraordinary people and things'</i> Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, Norwich and Rosemary Musker High School, Thetford	189
6.3.1	Overview	190
6.3.2	Research Process	191
6.3.3	Context and background	191
	• Rosemary Musker High School	191
	• A summary of ' <i>Extraordinary people and things</i> '	192
6.3.4	Key findings	196
	• Museums and galleries can support areas of the curriculum that are difficult for schools to cover in the classroom	196
	• Museums can inspire pupils with their collections and give them confidence in their own work while encouraging them to work independently	196
	• The relationship between the museum and the school was built up over time and acts as a model of how museums and their resources can support schools in the galleries and in the classroom	197
	• The session in the gallery and the visits from the artists provided pupils who did not normally have access to such activities with a rich cultural experience	198
	• While the session sought to build on existing work and experiences it broadened pupils' horizons	199
	• The partnership with the Sainsbury Centre encouraged the school to develop a longer lasting session – a model suggested by a moderator and one they will now follow because it was successful	199
	• Pupil perceptions of the visit and the work with the artists	200
	• Assessment marks	202
6.3.5	Conclusions	203

## CASE STUDY 3: *Extraordinary people and things*

### 6.3 '*Extraordinary people and things*'

#### Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, Norwich and Rosemary Musker High School, Thetford

##### 6.3.1 Overview

*'Extraordinary people and things,'* subtitled *'Developing ideas about personal identity: Making bigger stories out of small things'* was a partnership project between the Rosemary Musker High School, Thetford and the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, Norwich. It was designed to support two groups of GCSE pupils from Year 10 working on their art portfolios. It consisted of visits by artists to the school and a day long visit by the pupils to the Sainsbury Centre, with two groups visiting over two days. Two artists, selected and paid for by the Sainsbury Centre, went to the school in advance of the gallery visit. There they supported the work of the pupils on images and symbols of their identities. Pupils then used inspiration from the artworks in the galleries to develop their artistic concepts further in sketches in the gallery and in work in the studio at the Sainsbury Centre. One of the artists visited the school after the gallery visit to support the pupils in the classroom. Pupils were encouraged to develop their own ideas with the artist facilitating these rather than directing the pupils to adopt a particular style or medium. They appreciated this approach and enjoyed the freedom. For many it was their first visit to an art gallery and the artist hoped that it would encourage them to return with their families.

The project was planned by the Head of Art at the school and Veronica Sekules, Head of Education and Research at the Sainsbury Centre, following several meetings between the two of them. It was specifically designed to support aspects of the curriculum pupils found difficult, notably the section that required them to respond to work from other times and cultures. Pupils rarely went to art galleries with their families or on their own. The Sainsbury Centre, with its world art collection, provided an ideal resource for this and the artists were carefully selected to provide students with access to different cultural perspectives (one artist was a Maori from New Zealand; the second artist was from Iran).

This was an ambitious project, using a relatively unstructured programme in the galleries and heavily dependent on one artist who had not worked for the Sainsbury Centre previously. For the Sainsbury Centre it was important to allow pupils freedom 'so they feel they are in control of their work'.<sup>1</sup> It was as much about inspiring curiosity as it was about improving attainment. This approach illustrates the confidence of the Sainsbury Centre education team whose experience enables them to develop new ways of working with schools, and also the ambitions of the teachers who wanted to widen the horizons of their pupils, despite the difficulties they encountered in arranging

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with Veronica Sekules at the Sainsbury Centre 23 February 2007

the visit. As such it is different from the other case studies where more tried and tested programmes were offered for evaluation.

### **6.3.2 Research process**

Two researchers, Ceri Jones and Sheila Watson visited the Sainsbury Centre on 20 February 2007 to observe the visit by one group of pupils from Rosemary Musker High School. Veronica Sekules, Head of Education and Research was interviewed before the school arrived. They observed the school visit and during that time Sheila Watson briefly interviewed the Art teacher accompanying the pupils. Both researchers interviewed the artist, Ali Khademi. Each researcher wrote up independent observations of the visit and the interviews which have been used in compiling this report. Pupils also filled out evaluation forms on the day.

Sheila Watson visited the school on 1 March 2007 to interview the Art teacher whose group had been observed in the Sainsbury Centre and the Head of Art whose group had also participated in the sessions organised by the Centre both in the galleries and studio and in the school. Several pupils were interviewed, however none of the pupils wished to be recorded so any comments cited as being by the pupils were taken down verbatim on the day.

### **6.3.3 Context and background**

The Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts is a university museum located on the campus of the University of East Anglia, Norwich. It opened to visitors in 1978 in an iconic Norman Foster building designed by the architects Foster and Partners. It houses the collection of Robert and Lisa Sainsbury which comprises of objects from around the world dating from 4000 BC to the present day. Other collections include the UEA Collection of Abstract and Constructivist Art and Design, and the Anderson Collection of Art Nouveau. Material culture is exhibited in the permanent gallery called the Living Area. Different periods and countries of origin are exhibited together, though some objects are linked geographically, for example, under general headings such as Africa and Asia. Interpretation is minimal with most objects having a small label indicating the place of origin and date. This style of exhibiting the collections was first used when the building opened in 1978 and has been deliberately retained. The Sainsbury Centre has been extended twice, most recently in 2006 when Norman Foster added new exhibition areas, enlarged the visitor reception and shop spaces and added an education studio. It has a well respected and established education programme for both formal and informal learners.

- **Rosemary Musker High School**

A mixed comprehensive school in Thetford with approximately 800 pupils, Rosemary Musker High School was put onto special measures in April 2005 when the head teacher, senior assistant head teacher and the chair of governors resigned. A temporary leadership team managed the school until the appointment of a new head, and in November 2005 the school was deemed to have been making good progress. An inspection on April 2006

found that special measures were no longer needed and it is now deemed to be an 'improving' school. It recruits a significant proportion of its pupils from homes in areas of high social and economic deprivation with the number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities above average. The number of pupils requiring support because they have English as a second language has increased recently. However, the numbers of pupils having free school meals is average.<sup>2</sup> Only 22% of pupils achieved 5 or more GCSEs at A – C grade in 2006.

In February 2007 the school brought two small groups of year 10 pupils studying Art GCSE to the Sainsbury Centre, UEA on two consecutive days. One group of eleven pupils was observed in the Sainsbury Centre and subsequently in the classroom where interviews with some of the pupils and two teachers took place. The group observed was of mixed ability. However, on the day several pupils were missing and these were the ones who had not brought the permission slips back in with them. According to the teacher the ones who came on the trip were the better organised and more motivated pupils from this group.

According to their teacher the visit to the Sainsbury Centre was important because these pupils '*don't tend to access culture.*'<sup>3</sup> The Head of Art commented that '*for 99% of them it was their first exposure to fine art ever.*'<sup>4</sup> They could have covered this section of the curriculum using photographs and using some of the teachers' own art works but going to the Centre '*made such a difference because they could absorb the artefacts.*'<sup>5</sup>

- **A summary of '*Extraordinary people and things*'**

This is a complex project so its various elements are described below.

#### ***Pre- visit preparation***

The Sainsbury Centre paid for two artists to visit the school, and work with pupils before they visited the galleries in Norwich. One artist, George Nabu, is a Maori, experienced in working with the public. He showed the pupils his tattoos which covered his body from head to toe, brought them photographs of Maori art and gave them copies of Maori sayings. According to the Head of Art at the school, the children flocked to him and he was very charismatic:

*'George hooked the pupils in.'*

The other artist, Ali Khademi, also visited the school at the same time as George. From Iran, the artist had been chosen by Veronica Sekules, Head of Education and Research at the Sainsbury Centre because of his nationality which she thought would provide a context for the eleven nationalities in the

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<sup>2</sup> Ofsted Inspection report no 121186, April 2006

<sup>3</sup> Interview with Alison Pickering at the Rosemary Musker School, Thetford 22 February 2007

<sup>4</sup> Interview with Steve Mead at the Rosemary Musker School Thetford, 22 February 2007

<sup>5</sup> Interview with Alison Pickering at Rosemary Musker High School, 22 February 2007

school.<sup>6</sup> Ali had not worked with the Sainsbury Centre before so this project presented an opportunity to trial him. His way of working suited the Sainsbury Centre as it was open ended and he was keen on the 'pupil voice' and allowing the pupils to express themselves. Ali had eight years experience of working with young people in Iran, although this was his first experience of teaching young people at the Sainsbury Centre. At the school he was told that the pupils were working on the theme of human form and 'self' and from this idea he developed the concept of pupils working on symbols of their identity which they would then bring to the galleries. He worked extensively with the pupils in the galleries on the day of the visit and then followed up this experience with another visit to the school.

Prior to the gallery visit, pupils were provided with photocopies of images from the Sainsbury Centre; a Maori figure from New Zealand, the Luba Staff figure from Zaire and the 'Bucket man,' a modern sculpture by John Davies. They worked from the images and drew them. The artist had asked the pupils to work on an image in school that expressed some element of their identity and then bring it with them to the galleries. The pupils were told that when they came to the galleries they would choose an object that would resemble their symbol or could be incorporated into it and then they would make an artwork using their symbol and drawing for inspiration on the art in the gallery.

### ***Activities at the Centre***

- **The studio**

On the day of their visit the pupils went to the purpose built studio and were told that this was to be their base for the day. Then they were given a general outline of the day by Veronica. They were told they were going to stay at the Sainsbury Centre from 10 am until 2 pm and eat their lunch there.

In the studio they were told to make a representation of their symbol using the inspiration of the galleries in any media they cared to work with. They were shown materials they could use and these were extensive. The studio had one glass wall and the public could observe the pupils working. They first made badges with their symbols of identity on them and then went into the galleries to look for symbols in the objects they saw there which resembled their symbols.

- **The galleries**

Veronica first took the group to the Living Area, the name given to the main display area in the Sainsbury Centre, with the World Cultures Collection of art. She showed them the three objects which they had studied from pictures in the class room before the visit from black and white pictures. She asked them a series of questions about the first object, a free standing male figure of a Maori from the late 18<sup>th</sup> to early 19<sup>th</sup> century, made from wood and shell. She drew their attention to the materials and she encouraged them to look closely and see details unavailable in pictures. The second object, the Luba African Ceremonial staff from the Congo showed the figure of a woman. This

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<sup>6</sup> Interview with Veronica Sekules

was much bigger than the pupils expected from the pictures they had formerly seen. Veronica asked them to look at the details and explained that the staff was a sign of importance and she showed them how to interpret the object (for instance, it has a large head to show importance, with markings on the face depicting jewels; the face is shiny to show it is oiled, another sign of status). They were encouraged to go and see the third object, a life size sculpture, the 'Bucket man,' for themselves. Veronica suggested that they look carefully at the objects, just as she had encouraged them to do with the two examples, and look at the materials they were made from. She explained the layout of the galleries and told them to go round looking for objects connected to their symbols. Ali advised the pupils to write down some information about the objects and to think about why they liked them. The pupils then wandered round the gallery, drawing. They appeared absorbed in the task and worked quietly in ones and twos. The adults left them to wander round on their own though occasionally Ali or the teacher encouraged a pupil to look more carefully or asked them how they were getting on. Veronica told one researcher that there had been 'some sticky moments' in the main gallery when the students struggled to find images they could relate to their own symbols and she felt that most of them were looking too literally for symbols rather than for general inspiration. She had gone round to encourage them. She felt they were more comfortable in the second gallery, with the art nouveau material. Indeed once the pupils found their way after a while to the Anderson Collection of Art Nouveau they appeared much livelier here and more interested. At times they appeared rather overwhelmed in the Living Area that contained the material from the World Cultures collection. The pupils perhaps showed more interest in the Art Nouveau gallery because it contained more that was immediately recognisable to them, such as chairs and western jewellery. Pupils spent about half an hour in the galleries before returning to the studio.

- **Back to the studio**

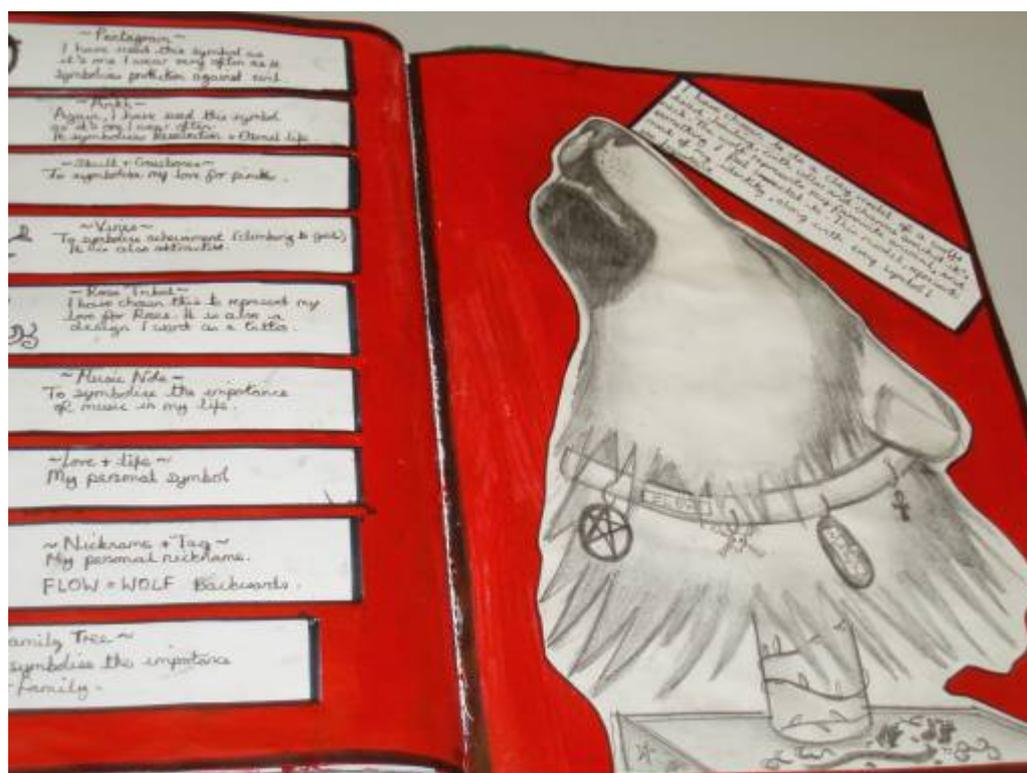
When they returned to the studio, Ali told the pupils it was time for them to make their own new artwork based on their symbols and the ideas they had gathered from the visit to the gallery. Their Art teacher who accompanied the group, reinforced that they would have complete freedom to do what they liked. They could do something '*wild*' if they wanted. Pupils were also given freedom of movement and told that they could go back to the galleries at any time for more inspiration (although most pupils appeared to stay in the studio) and eat as they worked so as not to break their concentration.

The pupils were enthralled with the materials available for them to use in the studio. It was like an Aladdin's cave of extraordinarily colourful resources of all descriptions. They immediately began to take materials back to their tables. Most pupils worked alone but three girls appeared to work together although they produced individual pieces. Alison took the opportunity to do her own work to give the students an example. The artist, Ali, worked quietly with pupils who asked for his help. He appeared to act rather as a technician, gluing materials or cutting them out. Very few pupils went back to the galleries to look at the artwork even though they were encouraged to do so.

At the end of the day there was a show and tell session in the studio when the pupils talked about what they had produced. After the pupils helped to clear the materials away, they were asked to show everyone what they had produced, what had inspired them and how this linked to their symbols of identity. They were all happy to do this and one or two said they had not worked on their symbols but on something else that had inspired them whilst going round the galleries. However, talking to pupils during their time in the studio, it seemed that quite a few of them struggled to articulate how the symbol they had drawn in the classroom to represent their identity related to the artwork that they had produced. Most pupils said that they chose something they liked. One pupil talked about the way her name represented an animal and she felt affinity to the characteristics of that animal. However despite their inability to articulate how they had linked their artwork with their identity, all pupils had produced a substantial piece of work and they were confident enough to talk about it. Their teacher was also impressed with what they had achieved.

- **Second visit to the school**

After the gallery visit the artist, Ali, made a second visit to the school to support the pupils' development of the work they had started at the Sainsbury Centre. The final piece of work was to be used as part of their GCSE course work.



- **Follow up work**

Pupils exhibited their work in school and Veronica Sekules from the Sainsbury Centre came to see it.

### 6.3.4 Key findings

- **Museums and galleries can support areas of the curriculum that are difficult for schools to cover in the classroom**

Both art teachers from Rosemary Musker High School were clear that the visit to the Sainsbury Centre was about improving the coursework of the pupils for their GCSE portfolio in Art and Design. In particular they hoped that the visit would help the pupils achieve a good mark for assessment objective AO2 which related to the ability of candidates to 'analyse and evaluate images, objects and artefacts showing understanding of context.'<sup>7</sup> Here, students are measured based on their 'response to examples of work from other times and cultures.' In addition the task would allow them to fulfil the following assessment objectives; AO4, which requires candidates to 'present a personal response, realising intentions and making informed connections with the work of others,' and AO1, the ability 'to record observations, experiences, and ideas that are appropriate to intentions.' The visit to the Sainsbury Centre gave pupils access to a wide range of material from other cultures and both teachers thought their pupils in the past had struggled demonstrating their responses to different primary material.

- **Museums can inspire pupils with their collections and give them confidence in their own work while encouraging them to work independently**



<sup>7</sup> GCSE Art and Design Assessment Matrix full course, 1027-1032

The teachers were delighted with the visit to the Sainsbury Centre. The Art teacher who accompanied the group observed for this research study was not sure what to expect from the pupils as she had never seen them in this environment before. Generally the pupils were expected to be quite shy; in particular they were quite anxious about making any sort of mark on the paper in case they 'got it wrong.' However, she said that once they had seen the objects in the exhibition and the materials in the studio *'they were straight in there'*:

*'They were inspired. They got to see - obviously, react to - artworks first hand.'*

If they had not visited the Sainsbury Centre the pupils would have worked only with photographs of objects and pictures of other artists' work. Although another teacher had begun to bring his own work in to show the pupils, the Art teacher felt that it was critical for the pupils to experience the objects first hand:

*'It was a massive boost in confidence and enjoyment and in what they learnt and you can't see it in a book... It made such a difference being there because they could absorb the artefacts.'*

For the artist, the project was about getting young people familiar with art galleries and giving them the confidence to come into galleries later on in their lives. It was about seeing art from different cultures but the artist was keen for pupils to think about themselves and their identities and to find something inside themselves that they did not know they had. The work that they did with the artist enabled pupils to work in new media and explore different methods of expressing themselves in a safe environment. In response to the questionnaire completed at the end of their visit, Pupil C rated the freedom they had very highly. The most interesting thing from the visit for her was:

*...being able to do whatever piece of art work we wanted based on our symbol.*

Another pupil also responded well to the freedom given, she wrote that for her the most interesting thing was:

*...that I could do whatever I wanted. There was (sic) so many materials to use.*

- **The relationship between the museum and the school was built up over time and acts as a model of how museums and their resources can support schools in the galleries and in the classroom**

The session in the Sainsbury Centre was an important part of a series of activities which had been developed in a partnership between the school, the education department at the Sainsbury Centre and artists. The Head of Art at the school and the Head of Education and Research at the Sainsbury Centre had worked together previously and they spent some time planning

these activities in advance. The artists were supplied and paid for by the Sainsbury Centre and were involved in the later planning stages of the project. On the day pupils were given a great deal of freedom to pursue their individual interests and artworks and the sessions were very carefully structured to enable this freedom.

The school had been selected for this project because of the large number of pupils of different nationalities at the school, eleven in total. This is unusual for Norfolk.

- **The session in the gallery and the visits from the artists provided pupils who did not normally have access to such activities with a rich cultural experience**

The Head of Education and Research at the Sainsbury Centre felt that working with world art '*can be difficult and intimidating*' for young people. For her, the project was not about formal learning but was about stimulating their curiosity:

*'...a legitimate stage of learning – developing skills for life.'*

Although she expressed some concern about evaluating their attainment, she had been encouraged by the artwork produced by the young people, particularly the first group from the school whose work had moved on '*significantly*.'<sup>8</sup>

Furthermore, the difficulties of engaging with world art were compounded by the fact that for most of the pupils from Rosemary Musker High School seeing art objects first hand was completely new. They had not been on this sort of trip before, predominantly because, in the Head of Art's words, Thetford is a '*cultural desert*.' Efforts to get the pupils out of school had also been hampered by risk assessments, for instance plans to see the Maggi Hambling scallop at Aldeburgh and a trip to London had to be abandoned because of the amount of 'red tape.' Both teachers talked about the difficulties of arranging a whole day out for their pupils and how complex the health and safety regulations were. Therefore visiting the Sainsbury Centre was a more attractive prospect, as it is relatively near to the school and it is seen as a '*safe environment*' for pupils.

It was clear that for both teachers interviewed, raising the attainment levels of pupils was a key objective of the project. Without the visit to the Sainsbury Centre they would have had to rely on photographs and some primary material which they themselves produced as artists. The response of the pupils to the session at the Sainsbury Centre reinforced that the opportunity to experience objects at first hand was very positive and beneficial for them. For one pupil, responding to the questionnaire immediately after the visit, the most interesting thing was:

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<sup>8</sup> A group of pupils from the school had visited the Sainsbury Centre the day before the group that were observed as part of this research study visited

*'seeing art work and sculpture from different countries and from different time periods made me understand more about culture and beliefs.'*

A second pupil wrote that the most interesting thing for her was:

*'...inspiration from so many different artists from all over the world, who I never though (sic) that I would take interest in.'*

- **While the session sought to build on existing work and experiences it broadened pupils' horizons**

For many pupils this session was their first experience of an art gallery and it was clearly a successful one. It exposed them to new ideas and unfamiliar artworks, but because of the careful way in which the sessions were planned, pupils were given a 'way in' to these artworks that they could relate to – their own identity and how symbols etc. enable individuals to convey that identity to others. The support of this theme, and the practical support from adults around them, perhaps helped them to improve their confidence in their own work. Furthermore, pupils clearly enjoyed their visit and engaged with the ideas of the artist. The teachers were delighted with both sessions, particularly because working with the Sainsbury Centre provided pupils with materials and ideas for their GCSE coursework which they would not otherwise have had.

- **The partnership with the Sainsbury Centre encouraged the school to develop a longer lasting session – a model suggested by a moderator and one they will now follow because it was successful**

Both art teachers were impressed with the way in which pupils had sustained their interest in this particular piece of work. Previously they had tended to give pupils:

*'...short, snappy projects to keep them motivated.'*

A moderator had suggested that they try to extend activities to allow pupils to develop their ideas more fully. This experience with the Sainsbury Centre demonstrates how beneficial longer, sustained pieces of work can be for young people. It has impacted on the way in which the teachers will work with their pupils in the future because now they can see that young people can work in a focused way for longer periods of time if the topic is engaging.

The link with the Sainsbury Centre was therefore very positive for the teachers from Rosemary Musker High School and they are keen to continue it. Both were convinced that they could already see an improvement in their pupils' work and they hoped that this would be translated into improved assessment grades for some of them.

- **Pupil perceptions of the visit and the work with the artists<sup>9</sup>**

Four pupils were interviewed about their visit to the Sainsbury Centre and all of them agreed that they very much enjoyed working on the project. For all four pupils the studio had been a big attraction, in particular they had loved the range of materials they were encouraged to use. They also liked the freedom to explore their own ideas. They had been confident, eager to show their work in progress to the artist, and they all enjoyed every aspect of the visit.

The interviews with the pupils and questionnaires that they completed immediately after the visit provide ample evidence for the types of learning pupils engaged in while they were involved in the project. Their responses have been analysed using the Generic Learning Outcomes and are presented below.

### ***Knowledge and Understanding***

Some of the pupils commented that the visit to the Sainsbury Centre exposed them to new types of art and that this helped them to understand '*more about culture and beliefs.*' One pupil also appeared to have reached a new understanding of what art meant to her, writing in response to the 'most interesting thing' about the visit was:

*...that is your imagination that helps you create your own Art work, and sometimes it counts more when you use your own imagination than somebody else's. But it is good to get influence from other artists and drawings. I found the visit to this museum very interesting because I found new things.*

### ***Skills***

The pupils interviewed at the school talked about enjoying the studio, in particular having the opportunity to use different materials and work in different ways to how they did at school. One pupil had made a tree using metal and textiles and Ali had helped her. Another pupil had liked some designs she had seen on glass and Ali had helped her to translate these into another medium so that she could use the ideas in a different way.

From the visit, most pupils learned how to transfer artistic concepts from one medium to another, as this fifteen year old girl comments on her questionnaire completed immediately after the visit:

*'...looking at the sculptures in the gallery and coming up with ideas from that work to add to my art work if they inspired me.'*

The following comment is also typical of the general experience of the pupils at the Sainsbury Centre:

*'I got to do completely different styles of art from what I normally did.'*

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<sup>9</sup> None of the pupils at this school wished to be recorded so notes were made as the pupils talked.

### ***Enjoyment, Inspiration, Creativity***

One pupil's drawing of a ballerina was inspired by Degas bronze ballet dancer she had seen in the galleries. The teenager talked about this a great deal and during the interview was keen to show the information that she had written about it and the drawings that she had made. It had also influenced her way of working. Before seeing the Degas she said she had made very 'still' pictures but once she had seen the Degas her work 'moved.' It had also been very positive for her that she had found an artist that liked ballerinas as much as she did.



All the pupils appeared to value the opportunity to view a variety of art and found that it helped them develop their own ideas. One fifteen year old wrote that the most interesting thing about the visit for her was:

*...using all the different materials and being able to walk out of the room, go look at something then come straight back with the ideas that I have just thought of.*

This kind of experience would not have been possible at school. Some pupils were also candid about the individual responses that they had, for example the following girl found more inspiring material in the paintings rather than the sculpture at the gallery:

*'Nothing inspired me from the sculpture but the paintings did – I saw things twisty and bendy on the paintings and swirls in the big first gallery.'*

### ***Attitudes and Values***

Although the group of pupils observed at the Sainsbury Centre had been predominantly female, the one boy who was part of the group had been particularly enthusiastic about the visit to the Sainsbury Centre.

*'I would live there if I could.'*

He had been to the Tate Modern in London and had prior to the visit had begun to think about what art was as a concept. When he looked at things, he asked himself the question - *'Is that art?'* The visit to the Sainsbury Centre had helped him to develop this attitude further.

Other pupils found that their concepts of what constituted art were influenced by the visit to the Sainsbury Centre. One girl, M, was able to articulate how her sense of what art was had developed as a result of her visit:

*...seeing and noticing that the simplest things can be classed as art, e.g. a chair or an ornament of a hippo.*

### ***Action, Behaviour and Progression***

One of the pupils had been inspired by the Art Nouveau gallery and, in particular a butterfly and a flower she had seen. It had convinced her to take control of her own work and have the confidence to branch out and do something she had not done before. For the art teacher this was significant because she was amongst a number of pupils who were usually very unconfident and relied on teacher support for every stage of their work. As the pupil herself explained:

*'I liked making different things in the studio. I liked it so I changed what I was going to do. I changed from working on my symbol to working on the collage of the butterfly and the flower.'*

Another pupil who was normally very reticent was keen to talk to the research about his experiences and display the information that he had written down from the artist who inspired him. The artist had made both big and small pictures and the colour stood out in an interesting way for this pupil who commented that:

*'You have to use your imagination to understand what he did.'*

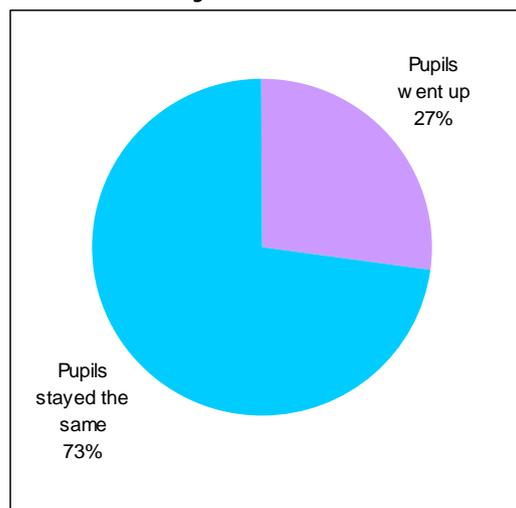
The same pupil was using the ideas he had taken from the artist to help improve his work.

### **• Assessment marks**

The evidence from the questionnaires completed after the visit suggested that pupils really enjoyed the Sainsbury Centre, they felt that they had learned something and they felt inspired by their visit. What impact did the visit have on their assessed work?

Looking at the assessment marks given by the school, the majority of pupils (73%) produced work at the same level as their previous work. A small number of pupils, 27%, experienced an increase in their grades for the museum-related assignment compared to their previous work. It was very positive that none of the pupils experienced a decrease in their marks for this piece of work.

**Fig. 6.3.4a: Assessment marks. Pupils from Rosemary Musker High School, breakdown by increase or decrease in marks**



N=22

Given that the teachers knew the pupils found this part of the curriculum difficult, the fact that most of them have been able to sustain the same level of achievement as before is significant.

### 6.3.5 Conclusions

This was an ambitious and complex project in which the gallery visit was one element of a range of measures offered by the Sainsbury Centre to support pupils unfamiliar with art galleries. The project took a number of risks in that it used a relatively untried artist and provided pupils with a great deal of freedom to make use of whatever they felt inspired them in the galleries. These risks paid off and both teachers and pupils agreed that it had been a positive and beneficial experience. The studio facilities enabled pupils to use a range of materials not normally available to them and the project offered support in areas of the curriculum that these pupils can struggle with. When their piece of work based on the project was assessed, the majority of pupils (73%) were able to sustain the same level of achievement as their previous work and the remainder of the twenty-two pupils experienced an increase in their marks. Given that they were working in an area in which they find difficult to achieve good marks, it suggests that the project provided pupils with some of the tools and inspiration they needed to sustain, and, for some, to surpass their usual effort.

Interviews with the pupils and teachers indicated that they were very pleased with the approach offered by the Sainsbury Centre and all felt it to be worthwhile. Many of the pupils were able to articulate how the artworks in the galleries had inspired their work. The pleasure and enjoyment experienced by the pupils who were unfamiliar with galleries and museums and who lacked confidence initially in their work was one of the key findings of this project and one which may have a longer term impact on the pupils' attitudes to fine art than one piece of coursework could be expected to do.

## CASE STUDY 4: *Wordscapes*

6.4	<b><i>Wordscapes: pictures, language and inspiration</i></b>	205
	<b>The Fitzwilliam Museum and The Manor Community College, Cambridge</b>	
6.4.1	<b>Overview</b>	205
6.4.2	<b>Research Process</b>	206
6.4.3	<b>Context and background.</b>	207
	• The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge	207
	• The Manor Community College, Cambridge	207
	• Background planning for the visit	208
6.4.4	<b>A summary of the visit to the museum</b>	208
6.4.5	<b>The school's perspective</b>	213
6.4.6	<b>The museum's perspective</b>	213
6.4.7	<b>Pupils' perceptions of the visit</b>	214
6.4.8	<b>Key findings</b>	214
	• Low ability pupils respond very well to a structured session in the museum	214
	• The experience and skill of the museum education officer played a large part in ensuring that the visit was a success	214
	• Training is important	215
	• Pupils felt valued	215
	• Learning took place in a variety of ways	216
	• Assessment marks	217
6.4.9	<b>Conclusion</b>	218

## CASE STUDY 4: *Wordscapes*

### 6.4 *Wordscapes: pictures, language and inspiration*

The Fitzwilliam Museum, and The Manor Community College, Cambridge



#### 6.4.1 Overview

*Wordscapes: Pictures, Language and Inspiration* involved Year 8 pupils from the Manor Community College and the Fitzwilliam Museum, both in Cambridge. Three groups of pupils visited the museum over three days in February 2007 and each group spent a whole day at the museum where paintings from the collections were used to inspire pupils' creative writing. The museum's Education Officer, Rachel Sinfield, who led the session observed for this case study, encouraged pupils to focus on individual paintings and to describe what they saw, helping to build their vocabulary. Pupils then developed their own poetic and narrative responses to the pictures using these words and sharing their ideas with the rest of the group. The last part of the day involved pupils choosing their own picture in the gallery from a selection offered to them and working alone on their writing. Once back in the classroom, pupils developed and refined their poems and stories.

*Wordscapes* was originally developed as part of the East of England's Education Programme Delivery Plan (EPDP) for 2004 to 2005 in which museum staff across the region were trained in facilitating creative writing for pupils of all key stages. The training offered to staff provided specific techniques in developing creative writing, knowledge of the school context and enhanced the confidence of museum staff to work in curriculum areas hitherto unfamiliar to them. The session developed with the Manor Community College was used with pupils of all abilities but this case study focuses on the experiences of a group of relatively 'lower ability' pupils. The session had been modified to take into account the pupils' low levels of literacy. Furthermore, few of the pupils were familiar with museums or galleries. Both the school and the museum's Education Officer were concerned that the pupils, whose behaviour can be challenging, would not work so well in the museum environment but they agreed to allow the observation and subsequent interviews to take place.

The session observed was tried and tested, delivered by a confident and charismatic member of the museum education team. It had been carefully planned in advance by the museum with the school. There were clearly agreed aims and objectives and the teachers understood in advance how the session would be delivered and what would be expected of them and their pupils. Despite the anxiety of the school and the museum regarding this group of pupils, on the day of the visit they behaved very well throughout and became completely absorbed in their work. Not even the presence of the researcher, a photographer and members of the public distracted them from their tasks. Perhaps as a result of their purposeful and focused experience, out of the group of thirteen pupils, 77% showed a marked improvement in their grades for their museum-related assignments. None of the pupils experienced a fall in their marks. Although this represents a very small sample of pupils it is nevertheless an extremely positive finding.

The case study focuses on the method of delivery of this session and the way in which pupils were supported throughout so that they became immersed in the subject. Throughout the session their contributions were valued by museum staff and, as a consequence, they became more confident and motivated in their learning.

#### **6.4.2 Research Process**

Pupils from Manor Community College visited the Fitzwilliam Museum on 2 March 2007 and this session was observed by an RCMG researcher. At the same time an interview was held with Rachel Sinfield, the museum Education Officer. A visit was made to the school on 9 March 2007, where teachers and pupils were interviewed. Further telephone interviews were conducted with Rachel Sinfield and teachers from the school. Notes of meetings between Rachel Sinfield and representatives of Manor Community College held on 8 December 2006 and 24 January 2007 to plan the visit were also provided to give context.

### 6.4.3 Context and background

- **The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge**

The Fitzwilliam museum is a university museum founded in 1816, collecting and exhibiting fine and decorative art, coins, medals, manuscripts and printed books and archaeology. It is housed in the centre of Cambridge in the nineteenth century Founder's building. Collections are exhibited mainly according to traditional typology. The art collections, for example, are shown in galleries according to schools and period. In 2004 the museum's new courtyard extension provided better visitor facilities, new exhibition galleries and an education studio. The education team provide a range of support services to schools, including inset, gallery sessions and planning advice for independent visits.

- **The Manor Community College, Cambridge**

The Manor Community College is a small mixed comprehensive school in north Cambridge situated in an area with a high density of social housing and a multicultural population. The area has received regeneration money to support community cohesion such as a community centre near the school. As the Ofsted report states:

'Of the 383 students on roll 20% are eligible for free school meals, which is higher than the national average. The proportion of students with learning difficulties or disabilities is 18%, this is about average. About 80% are White British and there are small numbers of students from other ethnic groups.'<sup>1</sup>

In 2004 the school was judged to be a 'failing' school and put on special measures until 2006 when the situation for pupils was deemed to have improved. The Year 7 intake of 2004 was felt, by then, to have made good progress since entering the school. League tables from 2006 indicate that the college achieved a 33% success rate for pupils achieving GCSE grades C or above, although this can be compared against 58.4% in the LEA as a whole and 57.1% nationally.<sup>2</sup> This falls to 25% (against 49.5% in the LEA and 44.9% nationally) when Maths and English are included. Therefore the most recent Ofsted report suggests that the school could do more to:

- Raise standards, especially in mathematics for girls and in literacy for less able students
- Increase the progress made by more able students by integrating more challenging work for them into lessons
- Extend the practice of using marking and assessment to inform students how to improve their work
- Ensure that the evaluation of work in all departments is of high quality.<sup>3</sup>

In February 2007 the school was awarded Performing Arts specialist status.

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<sup>1</sup> Ofsted Report for the Manor Community College, March 2006

<sup>2</sup> League tables available to view at:

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/bsp/hi/education/06/school\\_tables/secondary\\_schools/html/873\\_4057.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/bsp/hi/education/06/school_tables/secondary_schools/html/873_4057.stm) [accessed 08 10 2007]

<sup>3</sup> Ofsted Report for the Manor Community College, March 2006

- **Background planning for the visit**

The Fitzwilliam Museum and Manor Community College had been working together for three years. The sessions observed at the museum had been developed as a result of the Fitzwilliam Museum receiving Renaissance funding to train its staff in creative writing projects for Key stages 1–4. During these three years the school has had a rapid turnover of teachers and the teacher whose group the researcher observed had only been in the school since September 2006. However, the Head of Year 8 had worked with Rachel Sinfield from the Education Department of the Fitzwilliam Museum for three years and had taken pupils to the museum previously.

The preparation for the observed session began in December 2006 when Rachel Sinfield visited the school. Here she met the three English teachers who would accompany the pupils to the museum. Drawing on their experience of previous visits, the school outlined its aims and objectives for the session. Previous work with the museum was reviewed and the school outlined what had been successful in the past and what had been less so. They were keen for the museum to look at supporting the pupils in developing an extended narrative as a result of their museum visit, in particular focusing on:

- Word and phrase building using different techniques
- Language
- Ideas for writing
- Interesting ways of opening a story
- Catching a moment in time.

The work was to be assessed based on standard assessment test (SATs) levels.

The teachers visited the museum on 24 January 2007 for a preparation visit and here, practical details were worked out. The teachers warned the museum that the current Year 8 were particularly challenging in terms of their behaviour and the museum agreed to allocate two members of staff to each session to ensure that pupils had enough support. The school planned to bring three groups, one group of twenty-nine pupils of 'average' to 'upper' ability and two groups of ten and thirteen pupils. These latter two groups were of '*very low ability*' pupils whose '*behaviour could be unpredictable*' as detailed in the planning meeting notes. Details of the sessions led by museum staff were discussed and amendments made, following comments from the teachers.

#### **6.4.4 A summary of the visit to the museum**

On the day of the observation, the museum's Education Officer met the group at the entrance to the museum. The introductory session was held in the museum's studio space in the basement where pupils sat in a semi circle. At the beginning the pupils were excited and one or two made sarcastic comments about the studio to one another. They were reprimanded by the

teacher and told to quieten down.<sup>4</sup> There was a lot of adult support during the session; Rachel Sinfield, who led the session, was assisted by a second Education Officer from the museum, Julia Towzer and the teacher from Manor Community College was accompanied by two other adult helpers.

At the beginning of the session, Rachel offered the pupils a snack of either a banana or a flapjack and they all had some water. It was explained later that some of the pupils would not have had breakfast and this food served to fuel them for a couple of intensive hours of work. It also acted as a bonding session for the pupils and adults as it was felt that the pupils would behave better if the museum had offered them food and they had taken it. The pupils ate whilst Rachel Sinfield went through her introduction to the session.

*The first painting: Salvator Rosa's 'Human frailty'*



Each pupil had been given a stool to sit on whilst in the galleries and they were sat down in front of the first painting. They settled down immediately as

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<sup>4</sup> The researcher had been advised beforehand in an interview with the museum Education Officer that the session to be observed was with a group of potentially challenging pupils

the painting attracted their attention. Rachel asked them to tell her what they could see in the painting (see page 209). It depicted a mother holding a child while a winged skeleton swooped down towards the child. The surround was very dark and some other faces and objects could just be made out in the background. From the moment they saw the skeleton the pupils were intrigued and absorbed in the painting. Two girls who did not participate in the discussion led by Rachel were still watching and interested in what was happening. As the pupils described what they could see in the painting (for instance, a baby, owl, firework and skeleton), Julia wrote down on a flip-board chart the words that they used. Gradually the pupils worked out that the baby was ill (shown through a green tinge to a red face), the mother was sad and trying to hold on to the baby, and the skeleton represented death coming to take the child. Then it was revealed that the artist's son had died in the plague in Naples when he was aged twelve years and that this was a painting showing the grief of the parents. Rachel talked about the impact that might have on someone and drew parallels with the Boxing Day tsunami in 2004.

The pupils were asked to select three of the most important words to describe what was in the painting. The pupils chose 'baby,' 'skeleton' and 'roses' (the flowers seen in the hair of the mother - the pupils had spent some time thinking about the way the roses were fading and falling). Rachel then asked them to think about three ways of describing each of the three objects. The group selected the following words to describe the objects:

- Skeleton - 'bony, winged and terrifying'
- Baby - 'green faced, dying, frightened'
- Roses - 'fading, unhappy and crying'

These were put on the flip chart for all to see.

Clipboards were then handed out along with blank pieces of paper and pupils were told to copy the names of the three objects onto them, leaving a big space between each word. They were then asked to choose one description for each of the three words, to try and link the words and images together to make a story by adding a word or two between each of the objects. It was made clear to pupils that there were no rules and that they could use words as they liked. The teacher also emphasised that it was to be their creation and there was no right or wrong here. The pupils were given a few minutes to work alone and then Rachel asked for volunteers to offer up their work for the rest of the group to hear. She then read out some of their work which, at this stage, was impressive. One or two pupils had made more of a story and written in prose while others had written using a more poetic medium. The examples read out showed both sophisticated thinking and emotional depth, for example, one boy had written:

*...the skeleton helps the suffering red-faced baby to depart.*

Their class teacher was very pleased with their work, telling the pupils that it was both '*outstanding*' and '*exceptional*.' The pupils looked very happy and

enthusiastic. They had behaved impeccably and were keen to go on to the next painting.



***The second painting: Renoir's 'La Place Clichy'***

The pupils sat round the second painting and Rachel asked them how this painting was different from the other one. One pupil said it was '*happier*', another said it was '*blurrier*.' A couple of pupils showed an interest in the sculpture next to the painting and wanted to know if it was '*real*' so Rachel explained that everything in the museum was original – there were no copies.

Rachel then asked the children what they could see in the painting and they picked out the people and Rachel asked them to describe the details such as what they were wearing. They also identified horses and a carriage in the background. As before the pupils were absorbed in the exercise, although one boy who was keen to put his hand up at one point began to try and distract the others. However Rachel asked him to focus on what she was saying and he became absorbed again. Apart from this one incident the pupils were all interested and behaved very well; even when one boy tried to take over the museum Education Officer ensured that all pupils were encouraged to participate. Skilfully she kept them focused, asking them to pick out who was important. They picked out four people and the horses. They talked about how old the woman in the foreground was and why she might be hurrying. Rachel described the painting in terms that the young people would understand, for instance she talked about herself walking into the painting and it being as though someone had pressed the pause button on a DVD.



Rachel wrote down a list of the five characters that the pupils had picked out as being important and held it up. She explained that they were going to write an opening sentence to explain what was happening in the picture. The pupils took to this activity straight away; whilst they were working the museum staff walked round to encourage the young people and to see what they were doing. Afterwards Rachel read out some examples that the pupils volunteered. One boy had written from the point of view of the horse and several of them had written about an accident about to happen. As another exercise, Rachel then asked them to think about what happened next and to write another sentence or two with another character in it. The pupils were very focused and not distracted by what was happening around them, including the photographer taking pictures and the public wandering past. Once again Rachel read out some of the stories the children had started to write, which displayed great imagination and used complex sentences. The teacher praised their efforts and said they would carry on with this at school.

***The final painting: pupils choose their painting***

As a final activity, pupils were told to pick one of six pictures (they were given photocopies of the pictures to remind them) from which to write about. They started to write using a worksheet that they had been given.<sup>5</sup> This worksheet asked the pupils to respond to the following questions: to write down the name of the painting that they had chosen; why they had chosen it; what was important in the painting; where there were any hidden messages in the painting; did the painting remind them of a place or person (and if so, why) and, whether or not the painting could be the beginning of a story. Following this they were to write an opening line of that story.

Like the rest of the day, pupils were absorbed in the activity and worked well independently. Whilst in the galleries pupils were also asked to complete a questionnaire about their experiences for RCMG.

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<sup>5</sup> The museum's Education Officer had adapted the worksheet after another group had struggled to complete it, giving more guidance for pupils

### ***Back to school***

At the end of the session, pupils went back to the studio and picked up their things. At this point, away from the gallery, they grew more boisterous compared to their earlier behaviour. Before they left for school, Rachel told them that the Fitzwilliam was 'their' museum and that they were welcome to come back any time to see the paintings because it was free. One boy muttered '*no transport*' but the others all seemed to listen to this. Their teacher also reinforced this message and said they could come back whenever they liked.

#### **6.4.5 The school's perspective**

When asked what he expected from the visit in advance, the class teacher had hoped that the pupils would be engaged in a visual sense:

*'...so they can be stirred to write.'*

He had also wanted them to appreciate the Fitzwilliam Museum as he felt that most would never go there with their families. But in fact he had been:

*'...quite shocked at how quickly the kids adjusted to it.'*

The class teacher had done a great deal of preparatory work with his pupils prior to the visit, including an exercise the day before, but it had been very apprehensive for both teacher and pupils on the way to the museum. However the success of the visit could be put down to two things: the influence of the Fitzwilliam Museum itself on the behaviour and focus of the pupils and Rachel's approach, which as described earlier in this section had been very supportive and encouraging.

After the visit, the class teacher had noticed that his pupils were writing more. They also got going more quickly and they were keener to write. In the past they would procrastinate by asking all the time if they were doing the right thing. It was too soon at the time of the interview to tell if their writing had improved but their self-esteem had gone up. The group are all 'lower ability' and generally have little confidence in their writing or their oral abilities. However, the museum visit appeared to have helped them with both these skills.

#### **6.4.6 The museum's perspective**

The museum Education Officer had shared some of the concerns of the class teacher prior to the session and had been 'anxious' about the group because they were:

*'...the lowest ability group from that year and it is quite a tough year and so we could have been faced with behavioural issues.'*

However, she felt that the session:

*'...went really well... they paid attention really quickly.'*

For her the added extra that pupils got from coming to the Fitzwilliam Museum as opposed to working with photographs in the classroom was the impact of seeing the painting as an original object and being exposed to '*colour, texture, scale.*' She also thought that the painting was given additional '*gravitas*' because of the place it was in.

#### **6.4.7 Pupils' perceptions of the visit**

The visit to Manor Community College by an RCMG researcher took place after the visit to the Fitzwilliam Museum but before the completion of the assessed piece of work. Pupils were therefore still working out what the visit meant to them. They were interviewed in small groups during their English lesson and were found to be very keen to talk about their experiences in the museum. However, their behaviour problems were apparent even as they were interviewed in small groups. Two boys spent some time kicking each other under the table while they were being interviewed and when asked to stop doing this, they good-humouredly turned their attention to kicking the girls in front of them. Furthermore, from the start the pupils' poor literacy levels were apparent as they found it difficult to read the information sheet and the consent form which they were asked to complete. In two cases the pupils did not understand the information sheet and some time was spent explaining the background to the project and the context of the information sheet. Three pupils said they did not know what a signature was and one boy did not know how to write down the date.

Whilst pupils were very enthusiastic about their visit they found it hard to articulate their thoughts and feelings. They found it difficult to be self-reflective and tended to repeat back to the researcher the question without elaborating on it. Thus comments from the pupils are relatively brief despite their enthusiasm to respond.

#### **6.4.8 Key findings**

- **Low ability pupils responded very well to a structured session in the museum**

Despite concerns expressed in advance by the school and the museum, the pupils behaved impeccably throughout, enjoyed the session and worked hard. This case study is an excellent example of how museums can work with 'lower ability' pupils to help them with core skills such as literacy. Such pupils respond well to sessions that are very tightly structured and managed by the museum.

- **The experience and skill of the museum education officer played a large part in ensuring that the visit was a success**

From the very start of the session, the experience of the education staff in the museum was apparent. Nothing had been left to chance. Pupils were put at their ease at the beginning with a reassuring and unthreatening session in the museum's studio space where they began to explore some ideas about representation while they ate their snacks. Learning was incremental and

supported at every stage by practical and intellectual props. Pupils were comfortable and given all the equipment they needed. The use of a flip chart throughout and shared ideas gave pupils the tools to begin their own writing. The use of a picture that aroused curiosity and emotion to begin the session captured the pupils' imagination and inclined them to look at other, less obviously engaging pictures.

Throughout the session the vocabulary of the museum's Education Officer was appropriate and supportive. She encouraged them, praised them and shared their efforts with the group. Similarly their teacher supported them with praise whenever it was appropriate. Writing became a tool for them to express their ideas and their emotions and pupils began to succeed at something they had found very difficult in the past. With this feeling of success they became motivated to the point where, at the end, in the last session, they worked very much on their own on a painting they had chosen, in virtual silence, all concentrating on looking and writing and all with great enthusiasm.

- **Training is important**

The Fitzwilliam's museum Education Officer had been specially trained to help pupils of all key stages with their creative writing. She had found this training very helpful in devising special sessions for all abilities in the museum. This training not only gave her specific techniques to develop creative writing in museums but also gave her knowledge of the school context and confidence in developing language skills in the galleries. While she had plenty of previous experience in working with paintings in the galleries she had felt '*exposed and vulnerable*' in using paintings to help young people develop their writing as she was not a specialist English teacher. However, the training gave her the confidence to develop material and she used these new skills to develop work with paintings. Other museums have benefited from the scheme and skills are now shared across museums, thus helping to reinforce expertise and confidence.

- **Pupils felt valued**

It was clear that pupils felt valued and respected throughout the session. Some of the pupils expressed this feeling of worth in ways which were unexpected. Two boys in particular were concerned that the museum was free to visit because to them this meant that '*the lady*' (meaning Rachel Sinfield) had not been paid. They felt that people should pay around £5 to visit the museum. Their teacher explained that the visit had made them feel good about themselves because someone had taken the time and trouble to make them feel welcome. Wanting to pay for the museum visit showed that the boys felt the visit was '*worth something*' and this was their way of expressing it. The teacher also commented that the pupils' behaviour had been much better since the visit, they worked better and were more motivated.

- **Learning took place in a variety of ways**

Although they found it difficult to articulate what they had learned, all the pupils who completed a questionnaire at the end of their visit (the same group which was observed in the museum) agreed that the visit helped them to understand the subject and they all enjoyed it. The teacher had been able to identify real benefits in the pupils' concentration and interest in their writing following the session. Using the Generic Learning Outcomes to analyse the pupils' responses, we can see that learning took place in a variety of ways.

### ***Knowledge and Understanding***

Two boys felt that their writing would improve as a result of their visit because the experience had given them something real and concrete to write about:

*'You make up stories – you just make them up – we can write about something that is more interesting than just making it up.'*

One girl talked about the owl of wisdom she had seen in one of the pictures and said she learnt about that. It was not something she had come across before.

### ***Skills***

All the pupils felt that the visit had helped them to improve their writing skills though they found it difficult to explain how.

### ***Enjoyment, Inspiration, Creativity***

All the pupils related that they enjoyed the visit to the Fitzwilliam Museum. They felt particularly drawn to the skeleton in the first picture and several of them talked about it being 'scary' rather than something that they liked. One thirteen year old boy wrote that the most interesting thing about the day for him was:

*...all of the amazing painting from hundreds of years ago and writing kinds of stories.*

### ***Attitudes and Values***

We have noted how two boys were very concerned that they had not had to pay to go to the museum and that they were worried the museum staff were not getting paid:

*'They are putting in all that effort and they are not getting nothing out of it.'*

The teacher explained that this was because the boys had been made to feel valued and they wanted to show their appreciation of this in the way that they knew. For them this was obviously a life-enhancing experience.

### ***Action, Behaviour, Progression***

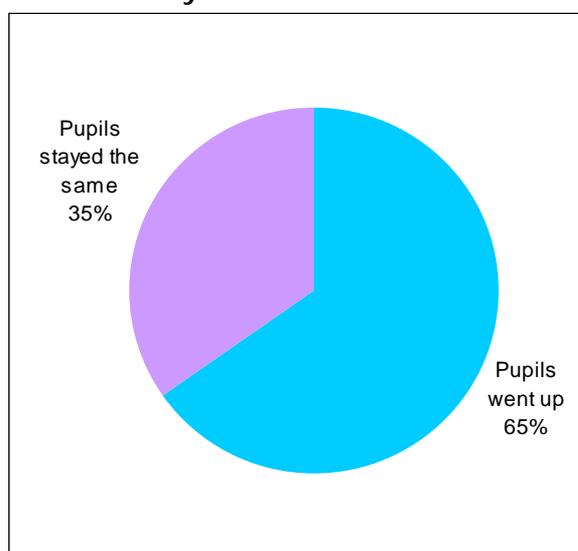
From the group, two of the girls talked about how seeing the paintings gave better ideas for their stories than just being in the classroom, although other pupils were less sure that the museum would result in better work in the

classroom. However, after the visit the pupils were observed by the teacher to be much more focused on their work.

- **Assessment marks**

Manor Community College provided marks for forty-nine pupils for the museum-based assignment along with two previous assignment marks against which the impact of the pupil visit to the museum could be measured. Of these pupils, 65% experienced an improvement in their marks for the museum-based assignment and 35% of pupils achieved the same level as their previous work. No pupils experienced a decrease in their marks and all benefited very positively from the museum visit.

**Fig. 6.4.8a: Assessment marks. Pupils from The Manor Community College, breakdown by increase or decrease in marks**



N=49

From the ten case study pupils, six pupils improved their marks for their museum-based assessment and the remaining four pupils produced work to the same standard as previous assignments. Although the degree of improvement appears to be slight, most pupils going up by less than 1 full mark, it is nevertheless interesting to find that no pupil went down and the majority improved their grades.

If we look at the evaluation forms completed by the ten pupils from the case study it is clear that the museum visit was a very positive learning experience for them. All ten pupils agreed that they enjoyed the day's visit and that they had discovered some interesting new things. All the pupils felt that the visit had given them a better understanding of the subject, and that they could make sense of most of the things they saw and did in the museum. Ninety per cent (90%) of pupils agreed that the museum was a good place to pick up new skills and that they had left the museum more interested in the subject.

This is an extraordinary achievement by the museum and the pupils given that these students worked on a writing exercise in the museum and they were a lower ability group which had not been expected to do well.

#### **6.4.9 Conclusion**

This case study provides an illustration of the way in which museums and galleries can support pupils with a range of learning problems which include behaviour difficulties, low levels of concentration and poor literacy skills. The success of the visit was due in part to meticulous planning by the museum and the school with the museum using a well established session, tailored particularly to the needs of this group, to support their learning. It is to their credit that the school and the museum agreed to participate in this study and to be observed when there were no guarantees that the pupils would behave, let alone make progress with their work. That the visit and the work produced subsequent to it went so well is also a tribute to the pupils' ability, once their interest was engaged, to work in a different and somewhat daunting environment and ignore the observer and the photographer as well as the public. Above all, however, in the opinion of the teacher and the observer, a great deal of the credit for the success of this session is due in no small measure to the competent and charismatic leadership of the education officer, Rachel Sinfield. The two boys who wanted to pay her recognised this too. The case study thus illustrates above all the importance of such skilled and experienced facilitators in museums and the need for museums to invest in training such facilitators so their skills can be enhanced and developed across the curriculum.